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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CHAUCER AND PANDARUS: CO-ARCHITECTS OF THE TROILUS

by

OLGA COSTOPOULOS-ALMON

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1986

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Chaucer and Pandarus: Co-Architects of the Troilus," submitted by Olga Costopoulos-Almon in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date: October 10, 1986

TO BERT, MELI AND VASILIS

ABSTRACT

The thesis argues that two of the chief concerns of Chaucer as a poet are the nature of creativity and the nature of interpretation. Both these concerns are manifest in the Troilus.

The first chapter traces the development of the story of Troilus and Criseyde from Benoit de Ste. Maure's Roman de Troie to Boccaccio's Il Filostrato, concentrating on the pre-Pandarian characterizations of the lovers and the pre-Chaucerian characterization of Pandaro.

The second chapter deals with changes Chaucer makes, especially with the narrator as a new persona in the poem. Emphasis is on his role as a manipulator of reader-response to the other characters and his role as a medium of the poet's inquiry into the nature of interpretation of experience and authority.

The third chapter concentrates on Pandarus as Chaucer's co-architect inside the poem, manipulator of the responses of the other characters. Pandarus is contrasted with the poet and the narrator with respect to their moral and aesthetic concerns as creator and transmitter, respectively.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STORY

> The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
> That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
> In lovynge how his aventures fellen
> ffor wo to wele, and after out of joie,
> My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
> Thesiphone, thow help me for tendite
> Thise woful vers that wepen as I write. (TC I.1-7)[1]

In this first stanza of Troilus and Criseyde, Chaucer's narrator claims that his purpose is to tell the sad story of Troilus's adventures in love. This initial utterance, for all its simplicity, reveals some of Chaucer's most serious and abiding concerns: namely, the nature of the relationship between the poet and his readers or audience, the nature of creativity, and the problem of interpretation. Chaucer was not an oral poet in the Homeric tradition. He was, however, a court poet who gave recitations of his work at court. He would therefore have been more acutely aware of reader--or audience--response than a strictly literary poet who only writes and sends his words out into the world to be read by anonymous readers. Lines 1 and 5 above, "The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen," and "My purpos is, er that I part fro ye," create a sense of the narrator's immediate physical presence. But we are again made conscious of being readers by the last two lines of the stanza: "Thesiphone, thow help me for tendite/ Thise woful vers that wepen as I write." The invocation of a muse of sorts--Thesiphone was one of the Furies--changes even the whole scale of the work. It is not to be just another courtly

romance; the frame has been cast for an epic. We are made readers of this love epic by the reminder that he is writing; we are kept sympathetic by his very human weeping. Thus, in one stanza, Chaucer has already initiated his own manipulation of reader-response, taking us from intimacy to cosmic distance and back to a mean of being sympathetic readers.

Chaucer's manipulation of the reader is also accomplished in part by the narrator's protestations of--and sometimes protests against--his obligations of fidelity to a received text. I intend to consider the various manipulations which go on in the Troilus, both of the reader and of the characters in the poem. These manipulations are carried out by Chaucer through his narrator and by his co-architect within the poem, Pandarus. They are a manifestation of Chaucer's attempts to deal with such literary fundamentals as meaning, interpretation, and the reliability of language itself.

The story of Troilus and Criseyde provides an ideal vehicle for Chaucer's exploration of hermeneutics and reader-response. It was a familiar tale; there must have been a half-dozen versions of it current when Chaucer was writing his.[2] He could be assured of a positive audience response by using it. This assumption of familiarity is suggested by his opening lines which rehearse the whole plot of the story he is about to tell. Because the audience (or reader) cannot possibly be in any suspense about the general story, Chaucer can use the audience's familiarity to establish a common bond between himself and his readers; both are readers of the same story and Chaucer takes advantage of this to make his readers actively engage in the text he is producing. At the same time, with characteristic economy, he forges the bond of trust between audience and narrator--a unilateral bond, to be sure, and one

which he will later stretch, deform, and otherwise test, but never break completely.

Drawing on Boccaccio, and referring to other tellers of the familiar Trojan story, Chaucer adds to and subtly alters an inherited text and story, while pretending to be constrained by it. He often apologizes for actions and speeches in his work which he anticipates may offend the readers' sensibilities, as if such offences were unavoidable. Within the text, Pandarus quotes Geoffrey of Vinsauf's comments on poetic planning and architecture as a prelude to his own ambiguous manipulations of Troilus and Criseyde. Pandarus seems a shadow of Chaucer the creator, suggesting a darker, sceptical, even perverse side of Chaucer's creative imagination. My principal concern is with Pandarus's role as co-architect in the poem and his work in the poem's complex manipulation of reader-response.

For a full appreciation of how Chaucer has developed Pandarus, it is as important to examine his origins and his pre-Chaucerian existence as it is to study the pre-Pandarian and pre-Chaucerian versions of the Troilus. Accordingly, I shall first trace the chronological development of the sources from which Chaucer draws, in order to demonstrate the changes Chaucer makes in his "lytel bok," and to lay the foundations for the main discussion of what Pandarus and Chaucer do with and to Troilus and Criseyde.

The first important account, for Chaucer's purposes, was written around 1160 by Benoit de Sainte-Maure, in vernacular French. His sources were the Ephemeris belli Troiani of Dictys Cretensis, circa fourth century A.D., the De Excidio Troiae Historia by Dares Phrygiis, circa sixth century A.D., and Virgil's Aeneid.[3] Benoit's epic is 30,316

lines of octosyllabic couplets, and is an ostensibly complete account of the Trojan War. Only about three thousand lines are devoted to the Troilus story, one of four (if one counts Paris and Helen) romantic tales interwoven into the main action to blot up some of the excess of blood. What makes the Roman de Troie atypical of a medieval courtly romance is Benoit's emphasis on war rather than on love. The story of Troilus and Briseida within the epic is quite typical, however, of medieval romances.

The hero, Troilus, is described as follows:

> Troilus was marvellously handsome; he had a cheerful expression, a rosy complexion, a bright beaming face, a broad forehead, and was highly endowed with knightly qualities. He had the most lovely fair and naturally lustrous hair, with sparkling eyes that were full of high spirits and had never been surpassed in beauty. Whenever he was in a friendly mood his gaze was so very gentle that it was a delight to look at him--but one thing I can tell you for certain: he had a different appearance and expression for his enemies. His nose was finely shaped and proportioned and his carriage well-suited to bearing arms. He had a well-formed mouth and fine teeth that were brighter than ivory or silver, a square chin and a long straight neck as befitted a soldier. His shoulders were well-set, long and sloping; his chest well-shaped beneath the laces of his hauberk, his hands well-formed and his arms handsome. He was slender about the waist and his garments sat well upon him; he was broad about the hips and was a marvellously fine knight. He had straight legs, well-arched feet and limbs that were finely formed in every way; and he had a large stride, so that he cut a very handsome figure. He was tall, but that suited his fine physique.
>
> I do not think there can now be throughout all the world such a valiant man so devoted to joy and pleasure and less likely to give offence to others--or one who was so magnanimous and devoted to the pursuit of fame and deeds of honour. And he was much loved, and he himself loved dearly and endured great suffering for that reason. He was the handsomest young knight among the youth of Troy and the most valiant, except for his brother Hector who was the true commander and leader when it came to the conduct of battle, as Dares assures us. The latter was the paragon of knighthood and Troilus was most worthy to be his brother, and was well-fitted to be, by virtue of his valour, courtliness and generosity.[4] (RdT 5393-446)

The physical portrait represents the pendulum of physiognomic aesthetic ideals swung to its greatest distance from both classical and modern ideals of masculine attractiveness. The sloping shoulders, long neck, slender waist and broad hips of Troilus are attributes we associate more with feminine than with masculine perfection. The general description is somewhat epicene: his moral qualities are at least as feminine as masculine. Noticeably absent is a description of his arms and armour, usually a salient feature of the description of any epic hero (see Homer). Troilus, one notes, is the second best knight in Troy. Although he does not lack valour, he is to be admired more for his beauty and pleasant personality than for his courage. As Benoit has limned him, he is not a hero who arouses great sympathy in the reader, possibly because he is entirely without flaws, and also without any special virtues. There is no interesting change or development in his character. He is an embodiment of an ideal; he is not a realistic character.

By contrast, Benoit's description of Briseida contains interesting details of perfection and imperfection residing in the same physiognomy. A short description of her includes the following:

> Briseida was charming and neither short nor too tall. She was lovelier, fairer and whiter than a lily or the snow upon a branch; but her eyebrows were joined, and that somewhat flawed her beauty. She had marvellously beautiful eyes, and was very eloquent and most well-mannered and prudent in conduct. She was greatly loved, and she herself loved greatly, but her heart was not constant. Nonetheless she was very timid, modest, generous and compassionate. (RdT 5275-88)

This description is less detailed, and therefore allows the male reader to imagine his own ideal in detail, or the female reader to picture herself as the heroine. The only identifying detail in her description, and the one which renders her less than the ideal, is her joined eyebrows.

According to F. N. Robinson, "In ancient Greece it was held to be a mark of beauty, and sometimes as the sign of a passionate nature."[5] Whatever their aesthetic status, they would be an unforgettable anomaly, as they would be extremely rare in a very white-skinned blonde. The sentences which follow are marked by some ambiguities and embedded contradictions about Briseida. It is not wrong to admire pretty eyes, eloquence, and good manners, but he says Briseida is "prudent in conduct." Her actions are later to prove his statement false. The next revelation, that "she was greatly loved, and she herself loved greatly, but her heart was not constant," is no surprise in a medieval romance. But Benoit is writing about archaic times, when inconstancy and loving greatly would have been opposites. A woman's fidelity was a necessary component of her love; inconstancy was the worst sin a woman could commit. The Trojan War, whether it be myth or history, attests to that. The last sentence quoted above is in some contradiction with the rest of the passage, and "generous" and "compassionate" are ambiguous. (In a later chapter we will see Pandarus exploit such ambiguities.) Briseida's subsequent behavior in the Roman contradicts much of her description above.

Benoit uses Briseida's behavior as a basis from which to generalize, later, on the nature of women. He may also be using his generalizations, in turn, to censure his own queen. How much of Briseida is modelled on Eleanor of Aquitaine is uncertain, but they have some things in common. Both have two husbands. The parallels can be extended to include Eleanor's husbands: her first husband, Louis VII, was much like Troilus--courtly but politically ineffective, and very popular with his vassals. Henry, Duke of Normandy, Eleanor's second husband (she had

divorced Louis), was perceived by the Aquitanians, quite rightly, much the same way the Trojans perceived Diomede.

At any rate, we know that Benoit was aware that the queen would be among his readers. Accordingly, after a lengthy passage on the general stupidity and fickleness of women (ll. 13410-821), he apologizes to Eleanor:

> I fear Indeed that I may be reproached for this by her who possesses such goodness and excellence, glory and merit--integrity, wisdom and honour--virtue, moderation and purity--and noble generosity and beauty. Through her virtues the misdeeds of many women are erased. (RdT ll. 13410-821)

Following this apology, he continues for another long passage on the rarity of a faithful woman, concluding with the following: "We could add a great deal more here, but this is not the place for it; so let us return to our subject" (RdT 13616-18). (His subject is a war being fought over a beautiful but unfaithful woman.) Benoit then takes up the departure of Briseida from Troy. Her expulsion is ordered by Priam because she is the daughter of Calchas, the traitor; there is no mention of her being exchanged for Antenor. She is being sent to the Greek camp where her father has gone; her life has been spared only because she is "noble, good, wise, and beautiful."

After Briseida has gone to the Greek camp and been won by Diomedes--she succumbs when he is gravely wounded and in need of nursing care--she reflects on her actions and offers a grim prognosis on her reputation. She engages in a long soliloquy in which she admits her guilt and expresses further Benoit's misogyny. It is worth quoting in some detail, as it is to be so thoroughly mined by Chaucer.

> Nothing good will ever be written or sung of me. I never at any time wished such a thing to happen. I behaved wrongly and

> stupidly, I think, when I betrayed my lover, who never deserved that of me. I have not acted as I should towards him. My heart indeed ought to have been so firmly attached to him that I should never have given heed to anyone else; but I was false, fickle and foolish in listening to that man's speeches. . . . The ladies of Troy will make me the subject of their talk. I have brought the most odious disgrace upon women and upon noble ladies, and my treachery and misdeeds will always be laid to their charge. . . . [I]n defiance of reason and justice, I have given my entire devotion to someone he [Troilus] hates above all others, and I shall always be thoroughly despised for doing so. And what good would it do me to repent? I shall never be able to make amends by that means. Let me then be true to this man who is a most valiant and worthy knight. I shall never be able to return to Troy nor leave him, for my heart is too firmly bound to him, and it was for his sake that I did what I did. Yet it would not have been so if I were still within the city, for then my heart would never dream of faltering or changing. . . . I am sure I should have died a long time ago, had I not taken pity upon myself. Although I have acted rashly I have got the better of the problem--for, whereas my heart had been deep in grief, I can now be happy and content. One should never go on enduring pain and suffering simply through fear of what people will say. . . . I should dearly love to forget what has been done in the past, for the memory of it sorely afflicts my heart. But whether I wish to or not, I must from now on devote all my energy to making sure that Diomedes remains in love with me--so that he may have joy and pleasure from it and I from him, since that is how things must be. I have led him on with promises so far that it is now time to grant his wish, his pleasure and his desire. God grant I may gain joy and happiness from it. (RdT 20202-340)

Even if Benoit's rhetoric can be ignored, Briseida is not especially honourable or admirable. Not only has she allowed expediency to win out over principle, she has actively encouraged Diomede, perhaps because there is more of the realist in her than Benoit is consciously willing to allow. Her actions are as much in keeping with a real medieval woman as with an idealized courtly heroine. If we look at Briseida's position realistically, she must know that she has to accept the marriage proposal of Diomede, or be raped, possibly by someone far less a gentleman than Diomede himself. The circumstances of war must be taken into some consideration. The story is medieval enough for Briseida to

have abandoned such classical conceits as honourable suicide. Suicide occurs to Briseida only as a rhetorical device. She says to Troilus, "God grant I may never live to see the dawn. Death is what I desire, seek, and implore" (RdT ll. 13270-71). Briseida, however, will take no positive action. This seems to be a pattern of behavior with her; she follows the line of least resistance in every situation. Benoit's rendering of Briseida's interior monologue must have made a very strong impression on Chaucer; he has virtually summarized the passage as follows:

> But trewely the storie telleth us
> Ther made nevere womman moore wo
> Than she whan that she falsed Troilus:
> She seyde, "allas, for now is clene ago
> My name of trouthe in love for evere mo,
> ffor I have falsed oon the gentileste
> That evere was and oon the worthieste.
>
> "Allas, of me unto the worldes ende
> Shal neyther ben ywriten nor ysonge
> No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.
> O, rolled shal I ben on many a tonge;
> Thorugh-out the wold my belle shal be ronge!
> And wommen moost wol haten me of alle--
> Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle." (V.1051-64)

Chaucer has condensed a great deal, and in doing so has allowed for ambiguities which in turn allow for multiple interpretations. Benoit has said so much, and with such force, that a thoughtful reader feels a pressure to resist his polemic. Chaucer has allowed the story to breathe again, by raising such issues as the nature of truth and the reality of individual experience as contrasted with communal interpretation of it. The whole courtly code is indicted in this passage of Chaucer's; Criseyde has loved according to the code, and is to be eternally condemned for it. The passage also illustrates with economy the unresolvable tensions imposed upon both parties in the writer-interpreter game: Chaucer

capitalizes on these tensions by using them to force the reader into the seat of judgment. In this case, Briseida herself is brought in, as a reactive subject. She has expressed her reaction to what is said about her, and in that sense, she has joined the hermeneutical circle.

Guido delle Colonne, who took up the story as an incident in his De Excidio Troiae Historia, completed in 1287, develops further the antifeminism of Benoit's story. Little of literary value is added in his 137-line treatment. Troilus's youth and knightly virtues are stressed, but most emphasis is placed on Briseida's treachery. Guido then generalizes from that to a discourse on the evil nature of all women. Only once in the whole Historia does Guido break into his own narrative; this occurs when he makes an authorial apostrophe to Troilus:

> But oh, Troilus, what youthful credulity forced you to be so mistaken that you trusted Briseida's tears and her deceiving caresses? It is clearly implanted in all women by nature not to have any steady constancy; if one of their eyes weeps, the other smiles out of the corner, and their fickleness and changeableness always lead them to deceive men. When they show signs of greater love to men, they at once at the solicitation of another suddenly change and vary their inconstant declaration of love. If perchance no seducer appears to them, they seek him themselves, secretly with furtive glances while they are walking or more frequently, while they wander through shops or while they linger in the public squares. There is truly no hope so false as that which resides in women and proceeds from them. Hence a young man can deservedly be judged foolish, and one advanced in age even more so, if he puts his trust in the flattery of women and entrusts himself to their false declarations.[6] (HDT 11. 159 ff.)

As Chaucer's Criseyde rightly says, "thise bokes wol me shende." Guido has made his position clear. In fairness to him, however, we must note two minor mitigations of Briseida's culpability. The first is that instead of Briseida giving her glove to Diomedes, as Benoit has it, Diomedes simply takes it. The second is that Guido describes Diomedes in

far more scurrilous terms than Benoit, who was not partial to the Greeks in his account. (Generally, the French, Italians and English tend to be pro-Troy, in the belief that their chief ancestor was Aeneas.) The above address to Troilus, concerning feminine deceit, is written by a judge whose history, to put it charitably, is more creative than necessary. His irony is regrettably unconscious but justly reflexive.

Boccaccio has restored the story of Troilus and Criseida to the realm of literature, reclaiming it from Guido's barren grasp. This restoration has been accomplished by several means. First, the scale of the action has been humanized, both by concentration only on the love story from its inception to its end, and by what C. Muscatine has called the "urbanization" of the poem.[7] Along with this urbanization is the placement of the story in some "local habitation," a place where the reader can imagine the story happening. Boccaccio has not gone so far as to create a second audience in the townspeople of Ilium, as Chaucer will later be seen to do, but he has made it possible for Chaucer to take that step.

Secondly, Boccaccio has breathed life into the characters he has inherited. He admits to identification with the hero and identifies his beloved, whom he addresses as Filomena in the prologue to Il Filostrato, with Criseida. His admission of identification with the hero may account for the emphasis he places on Troiolo's youth; Boccaccio was twenty-six when he wrote Il Filostrato. Identification notwithstanding, he has not made Troiolo a character with whom the audience or reader can sympathize. Given that people were considered mature at fifteen in the fourteenth century, Troiolo would probably be in his teens. Criseida may be an 'older woman' of nearly twenty or more.

Troiolo is, like most adolescent males, a mixture of innocence and experience. He says of himself:

> "Through my own great stupidity I have already found out what this accursed passion is like, and I should certainly be lying if I said that Love had not been gracious to me and given me joy and pleasure."[8] (Il Fil I.23)

We may infer from this that he has some limited sexual experience but as yet knows nothing of Love. He is still enough of a child to scorn his friends in the temple whose lust is apparent in their eyes. His speech of pride preceding his fall is worth quoting in full, as it will be compared later to the one Troilus makes under similar circumstances.

> He would start to praise this woman and that, and then find fault with each of them, as do those who favour no one woman more than another--continuing to rejoice in his freedom.
>
> Indeed if, whilst walking about in this way he saw anyone fix his gaze on a lady and sigh to himself, he would point him out with amusement to his companions, saying: 'That poor soul has renounced with the freedom that so encumbered him, and delivered it into the hands of that lady. You can see just how vain his hopes are.
>
> 'What is the point of devoting any kind of love to a woman? For as a leaf flutters in the wind, so in one day their affections change more than a thousand times, and they do not care what pain any lover may feel on their account, nor do any of them know what they want. Happy is he who is not beguiled by their charms and is able to avoid them.' (Il Fil I.20-22)

Such foolishly misogynistic speeches cry out for retaliation; Troiolo's complaints foreshadow his own plight. His interior monologue, after he has succumbed to Love, adds little to Troiolo's credit:

> And not an hour of the day went by without him saying to himself a thousand times: 'O bright light that inspires my heart to love, O fair Criseida--God grant that your noble qualities which have made my face lose its colour may arouse some compassion in you. No-one but you can make me happy; you alone amongst women can help me.' (Il Fil I.43)

Not one word does he utter about wanting to make her happy. Such egocentricity and such unawareness of the "other" are predictable at Troiolo's (and Boccaccio's) age, time and place. But Boccaccio must have had some sense of his hero as a misguided individual; he damns him with the following faint praise:

> Yet it was not hatred of the Greeks that led him to do this [performance of astonishing feats of bravery], nor was it done in the hope of delivering Troy from the pressure of the siege in which he found her—but it was for the sake of glory. He did all this to gain more favour with his lady; and if the account is true, love made him so bold and mighty that the Greeks feared him like death. (Il Fil I.46)

Troiolo does the right thing for the wrong reason. His courage is not a real, innate or constant attribute: he simply wants to impress a girl. When real courage is needed later, to keep Criseida, he fails, suddenly overcome by "mature" reason. Like the city of Troy, he can do nothing but sit and await destruction by the Greeks.

Criseida is a slightly more complex character than Troiolo. Boccaccio introduces her as follows:

> Calchas had left a widowed daughter of his in the midst of such dangers, without giving her any warning about them. She was so angelically beautiful to behold that she did not seem to be a mortal being, and her name was, I believe, Criseida. She was prudent, honourable, wise and well-mannered as any woman born in Troy ever was. (Il Fil I.11)

We also learn, a few lines later, that she is wealthy and barren. Her barrenness may be metaphorical as well as actual; her widowhood is what C. S. Lewis might have called "an offence against the courtly code."[9] The usual love triangle of lover-wife-husband has been violated by the deletion of a husband. Criseida's widowhood adds much to her ambiguity. Possibly Boccaccio has made her a widow in order not to offend those who

would find the seduction of a virgin an offense to their religious sensibilities. Possibly, Criseida, as a widow, can be expected to know well "the olde daunce" and to have been left psychologically as well as financially more independent. Possibly in order to make his heroine more universally appealing, Boccaccio has kept the physical description very general. He even omits the joined eyebrows. Boccaccio's narrator is, on the whole, unsympathetic to Criseida.

Later, in Part VIII, Boccaccio does not give us a text of any of Criseida's letters. We do not, as we do in Chaucer's Troilus, go with Criseida into the Greek camp. Boccaccio merely says that Troiolo "received nothing but fine words and large but unfulfilled promises" (Il Fil VIII.5). Troiolo's perception of Criseida is not a valid one for us, for he sees her as a lover. Even he has little idea of any of her personal qualities--they don't talk much--and he is capable of seeing her only as an answer to his problems. His letter to her in Part II reveals nothing about her, apart from a vague impression of the passivity expected of her.

Pandaro's interpretations of her are no more trustworthy. He generalizes about women as if he had real knowledge:

> I firmly believe that all women are at heart inclined to love and that nothing holds them back but fear of disgrace. And if a suitable remedy for this disease can decently be offered, she who does not thus cure himself is foolish and is, I think, not really troubled by the problem.[4] My cousin is a widow and has passions, and if she denied it, I would not believe her. (Il Fil II.27)

For obvious grammatical and syntactical reasons, I prefer the translation by Griffin and Myrick, cited in Havely's note 4 above, which is reproduced here:

> 4.: literally, 'it seems to me that the pain little burns (cuoca) her'. Griffin and Myrick's rendering of the passage is very different, viz., 'foolish is he that does not ravish her. And little in my opinion does the punishment vex her.' But such a notion seems somewhat crude, even for Pandaro.

Pandaro certainly has the potential for sufficient crudeness to say such a thing; his actions and speeches elsewhere in the poem are far worse than the crude speech above. Pandaro is neither a sympathetic nor reliable guide to an analysis of Criseida.

We must look at Criseida herself. Her interior monologue, after Pandaro's first departure, reveals a limited intelligence and a conscience operating at a very simple level:

> I am young, good-looking, attractive and happy; a widow, wealthy, noble and well-beloved; without children and at peace with the world. Why should I not be in love? If honour perhaps forbids me to do so, I shall be discreet and keep my desires so secret that I shall not be thought ever to have harboured love within my heart. . . . To do as others do is no sin, and no-one can be reproached for that. (Il Fil II.69-70)

Ethically and morally, Criseida is not well-developed; conscience is the fear of exposure and embarrassment and perhaps punishment; and conformity to the group--doing as others do--"is no sin." She does, however, present a counter-argument a few lines later, in which she considers the negative possibilities of loving: jealousy, abandonment after seduction, loss of reputation, and the general grief and suffering. But she does not make up her mind on love yet.

In her speeches to Pandaro, she is incapable of making herself understood, or correctly interpreted. She is no Criseyde, who can, by apparent submission to Pandarus's importunings, actually thwart his manipulations. Criseida simply accepts her fate passively. Her only real decision is to accept Troiolo in her heart. Like Criseyde, she has

no real choice about accepting him in her bed. In her last speech she, like Benoit's Briseida, mouths her author's misogyny. Boccaccio's interpretation of women, at least as represented by Criseida, is that they are ultimately unknowable and therefore to be feared. But they are also very attractive. They must then, because of the conflicts and confusion they cause in men, be hated.

Criseida's actions express Boccaccio's antifeminism: she is unfaithful to Troiolo; she is cruel to him after she has abandoned him (giving his brooch to Diomede is, at best, in extremely poor taste); and she has been disgustingly fictile in the hands of her cousin Pandaro. G. L. Kittredge is right in at least one part of his assessment of 'Griseida': "No man in his senses could expect her to be faithful."[10]

Agreement on an interpretation of Criseida may not be possible. No one can agree with Troiolo's perception of her; he sees her only as a lover and an ex-lover, and neither of these unique positions gives very good perspective. We cannot agree with Pandaro, who sees her and uses her as a moveable [sex] object. It is tempting to see her in archetypal terms, as an Eve figure. Troiolo is almost innocent enough to be an Adam, and Pandaro is without doubt an apt serpent. Whatever we may feel about Criseida, her characterization begins to call the reader's attention to larger concerns of public and private morality: the differences in interpretation of ethics and ethical language, for example, the multiple meanings in the poem of such words as "honour," "innocence," and "sin," and the very real problem of communication and interpretation between human beings.

Any problem of communication in the Filostrato must involve Pandaro. Pandaro is Boccaccio's most important innovation in the Trojan

story. It is through Pandaro that the lovers first communicate, and it is his interpretations of the other that each relies upon during the crucial, initial stages of the affair. Pandaro is presented by his creator with few details given in narrative form. We must rely on other means to define his character and his significance.

Apart from the obvious reason of some means whereby the lovers can be brought together, there is a more important reason for the creation of Pandaro. As told by Benoit and Guido, the story begins with the lovers already together, with no need for a go-between. But Boccaccio hints at the real need for Pandaro in his Proemio to Il Filostrato:

> . . . I have heard the following question being asked and considered: 'A young man ardently loves a lady of whom Fortune allows him nothing more than being able to see her sometimes, or talk about her sometimes to someone else, or to think about her pleasantly by himself. Which of these three things, then, offers him the greatest pleasure?' (Il Fil Prol., p. 20)

The author then complains to Filomena that the first and last of these three possibilities have failed him; therefore, he will use language to relieve his longing. He will talk about his love. On the large scale of the whole work, we, the readers, have become his confidants:

> And my words also, which were once heard in love-songs and passionate protestations prompted by some secret delight that sprang from your radiant looks, can ever onwards be heard by all at hand, calling upon your most gracious name and upon love to reward my sufferings or death to end them--or transforming--themselves into the most bitter complaints. (Il Fil Prol., p. 21)

Within the poem, Troiolo's most intimate friend and confidant is Criseida's young cousin, Pandaro. K. Young has documented the most important literary antecedents of Pandaro; they require no rehearsing

here, except to remind the reader that most are of Roman origin, and most inhabit comedy, not tragedy.[11]

European literature has often reflected a cultural pattern common throughout the area since antiquity: the phenomenon of male friendship bonding. Troiolo and Pandaro are friends, and in both cultures--Boccaccio's own and the one about which he is writing--this bond is easily as strong as the bonds between lovers, parents and children, siblings, or any other close relationship one can name. Their intimacy, in some respects, is greater than any of the relationships just mentioned, their affection more physical and, on Troiolo's part, more spontaneous. There are three separate instances in the Filostrato of Troiolo hugging, kissing, and throwing himself upon Pandaro's neck in a transport of emotion, either joy or despair. The friendship that exists between the two is not, however, a perfect friendship. It is a bit one-sided.

Pandaro is never as spontaneous as Troiolo, either with Troiolo or with Criseida, his cousin. Pandaro never initiates the emotional states he shares with Troiolo; he quickly adopts Troiolo's mood, as soon as he perceives what it is. He always knows just how far to presume on the friendship with the prince. He is obviously an intimate of the family, as he can take for granted access to Troiolo's bedroom in the palace. His entrance into the work is by his abrupt entrance into Troiolo's room, unbidden and unannounced. Chaucer will use this entrance later, with great effect. Pandaro is no sooner in the room, than he begins to press the hapless hero for the cause of his malaise. His manner is jocular; he treats Troiolo as an equal. It is to his friend Pandaro, not his own brothers, that Troiolo reveals his love for Criseida.

Pandaro makes repeated protestations of his love for Troiolo as his motivation for all his activities, and, given their cultural milieu, this is a plausible motivation. However, there is also a possible political motivation which Pandaro hints at in his speeches to Criseida. Troiolo is, after all, a prince. To be useful to a prince is to gain power; to control a prince is to control power, and it is power that Pandaro is interested in. He gains that power over Troiolo by subtle means mainly consisting of acts of language, as the following exchange demonstrates:

> Pandaro then said: "I hear and understand all you are saying quite clearly, and have never hesitated and never will to help you in your troubles. I am always ready to do for you not only what I ought but anything at all, without being made or asked to do so. Just let me see plainly what your noble desire is.
>
> I know that in all matters you see six times more clearly than me, but nonetheless, if I were you, I should write to her about my suffering, fully and in my own hand. Furthermore, I should beg her, in God's name and in that of love and courtesy, to think of me; and when you have written that I will deliver it at once. . . . This advice greatly pleased Troiolo, but like a fearful lover he replied: "Alas, Pandaro, since women are known to be modest, you may find that for that reason Criseida will scornfully reject the letter you bring--and we shall have worsened our position immeasurably."
>
> To this Pandaro replied: "If you want, you can do as I tell you and then leave it to me. . . . If you don't care for that, you can go on being timid and mournful about it. Go ahead then and bewail your sufferings--for as far as I am concerned nothing that could make you happy is being left untried." (Il Fil II.90-94)

What is happening in this passage is the final seizure of control by Pandaro. It begins with the reassurance--yet again--of loyalty and altruism, progresses through false humility, and then goes to suggestion. But the suggestion, couched in the subjunctive ("If I were you, I should write, . . . should beg"), quickly slides into the indicative ("I will deliver . . ."). Troiolo's feeble objection raises the

possibility of their failure (emphasis mine), but Pandaro overrules it by ignoring it and reminding Troiolo instead that if he does not follow the advice offered, his situation cannot possibly improve. He also implies, by the separation of "you" and "I," that he will not be responsible for failures. But of course he will take all the credit for success. Because Troiolo is so deeply in love, he is too self-absorbed to be aware of the political considerations which are always mingled with Pandaro's friendship. Troiolo fails to interpret what he hears correctly, and Pandaro relies on this failure for the success of his manipulation of Troiolo.

Pandaro's treatment of his cousin demonstrates further the strength of the bond between himself and Troiolo, and the strength of Pandaro's need to be useful to Troiolo. Criseida is also bound to Pandaro, but as someone who is under his control. She interprets this bond as a mutual responsibility she and Pandaro have for the preservation of the family honour. She learns quickly that Pandaro will not only fail to uphold his responsibility, but will abuse her trust:

> "I used to believe, Pandaro, that if I were ever to grow so foolish as to entertain any sort of desire for Troiolo, you would not only have reproved me but beaten me--as any man would if he felt impelled to maintain my honour. God help me!--what will the others do, now that you are plotting to bring me under the rule of love?" (Il Fil II.48)

Boccaccio presents this as if it were normal for a woman to expect a beating if she failed to comply with the expectations of the male upon whom she depends. After this speech of Criseida's, we ought not to be shocked by her subsequent behavior; physical intimidation is difficult for anyone to resist, and tends to encourage covert rebellion.

Both Pandaro and Criseida know that the loss of her honour will

reflect badly on Pandaro as well, but he is still willing to sacrifice the reality of honour, as long as he can maintain the appearance of it to others. He minimizes the possibility of discovery to Criseida, but he maximizes the enormity of the sin he has committed in the cause of friendship, to Troiolo. He says to Troiolo, after he has seduced Criseida for him:

> It is for you that I have become a go-between--for you that I have abandoned my reputation--and for you that I have corrupted my kinswoman's chaste thoughts and found your love a place in her heart. And it will not be long before you discover that, with greater delight than I can speak of, when you hold sweet Criseida in your arms. (Il Fil III.6)

Depending upon which of the lovers he is with, Pandaro shapes his speech for maximum persuasiveness. He becomes different people, depending upon the company he is in. But in order to have the power he has, he has had to give up his integrity and the control of his own life. His powers are illusory, his satisfactions dependent on the satisfactions he can engineer for others--no easy matter in the realm of love. He is but the servant of Love's servants.

On few occasions in the poem are we made privy to Pandaro's private responses to others' speeches, actions, or particular situations. These brief passages reveal something of the character of Pandaro, and, on close examination, reveal the germ of the characterization of Pandarus. The first occasion is told as follows:

> Pandaro, for his part, felt he had been made a fool of when he heard what the young lady was saying, and he got up as if to leave. But then he paused, turned back to her and said: 'Criseida, as I hope God may grant my prayers, I have spoken to you on behalf of a man for whom I should speak thus to my own sister, daughter or wife, if I had one, for I know that Troiolo is worthy of much greater things than your love could offer.' (Il Fil II.52-53)

His earlier assurances to Troiolo (II.27) of the general concupiscence of all women have proven false, and he has been temporarily blocked in his attempts to procure his cousin for his friend. He does not give up, however; he only gets up, Boccaccio says, as if to leave. In one stanza, he feels foolish but reacts immediately, adopts a new plan of attack and begins to use it without so much as disturbing the meter. This new assault is buttressed by the reiteration of the carpe diem argument. His speech bears no implication that he has felt even momentarily foolish; the inner response has had no external expression.

This pattern is repeated soon after in Pandaro's next encounter with Criseida, when he tries to give her the letter from Troiolo:

> Pandaro was somewhat put out by this [refusal of Criseida to accept the letter] and said: 'It's a remarkable thing to see how, when women very much desire something, they all seem averse from it and disturbed by it in the presence of others. I have told you a great deal about this business, so you should not at this stage start turning bashful in front of me. I beg you now not to refuse me this.' (Il Fil II.112)

Again, the emotional response is followed immediately by a more determined verbal assault. These encounters between Pandaro and Criseida are remarkably brief, especially when compared to the long corresponding sections in Chaucer's Troilus, which add greatly to the complexity of both characterizations. In fact, the above encounters are so brief and Pandaro's verbal responses so at variance with what he is actually feeling, that there is some doubt at this point whether there is any emotional depth to Pandaro at all. He is playing with Criseida's emotional life, but his own emotions are not really involved. His responses, thus far, are more a matter of momentary annoyances than real

feelings. They do, however, demonstrate his lack of feeling for Criseida.

Pandaro is more careful with Troiolo, as the next incident indicates:

> Pandaro arrived; he had already found out what the Greek envoys sought and furthermore how those in authority had decided to hand over Criseida. Thus with a look of utter dismay and his mind upon Troiolo's troubles, he entered the dark and silent room, not knowing whether to speak sadly or cheerfully. (Il Fil IV.43)

"Dismay" or "sbigottito," as Boccaccio has it, is not necessarily an indicator of an emotional state. Boccaccio's line is "di che nel viso tutto sbigottito"; his face is one of dismay, but not necessarily his heart. And it is his mind, not his heart, that is occupied with Troiolo's troubles. He does respond outwardly, in the next stanza, with tears of pity. But there is that awkward little hiatus between entering the room and deciding how to behave that clearly negates any claim that Pandaro acts spontaneously.

This is not to say that he is totally devoid of feeling; rather, he is in control of his emotional states, unlike the lovers who are ruled by their passions. Pandaro does, after all, weep with both the lovers in turn (IV.44, 63 and 101), even, in the last instance, "forgetting what he had meant to say and joining her [Criseida] in bitter weeping." (Chaucer's Pandarus, as we will see in a later chapter, behaves with more self-restraint, possibly as a result of his greater maturity.) Later, in Part V, Pandaro seems to respond with genuine pity for Troiolo:

> When he had said a great deal more of this kind of thing, Pandaro, who was saddened to see such deep distressing affliction in him, said: 'Come, Troiolo, as you hope this sorrow may come to an end--do you think no one but you ever suffered the blows of love or had to be party to a parting?' (Il Fil V.29)

But this time, his verbal response is still at variance with his real feelings, and is harsh, not sympathetic. This episode is followed closely by a similar one. Pandaro and Troiolo have just returned from Sarpedon's house and Troiolo is expressing the hope that Criseida will have returned in his absence:

> But Pandaro, fully realizing Calchas's intentions, had other opinions and said quietly to himself: 'If I am not deceived by what I have heard since she left, this fierce and ardent desire of yours may well cool, and I think the tenth day, month and year will pass before you see her again.' (Il Fil V.49)

Pandaro has evidently had information which not even the reader has been given. This enhances the secretive aspect of Pandaro's character and also emphasizes again his potential for manipulatory behavior, a potential which will become kinetic in Pandarus.

The final, convincing instance of Pandaro's manipulation by deceit or concealment is in Part VII, when Pandaro has heard Troiolo's naive declaration of hope that Criseida will come soon:

> Pandaro laughed to himself, but quietly, at what Troiolo said, fully understanding what had led him to speak like that. And in order not to make him more wretched than he was, he gave the appearance of believing him, whilst saying: "The poor young fellow is waiting for a breeze from Etna!" (Il Fil VII.10)

It is private laughter, deliberately concealed from Troiolo out of kindness. But it reveals to the reader that Pandaro is ultimately a cynic by Wilde's definition: he knows the price of everything but the value of nothing. There is more cynicism than empathy in a character who can laugh at his best friend's suffering and dismiss it in his mind with a proverb. (At such moments in the Filostrato, one can easily imagine that Pandaro is but a younger version of Pandarus, whose propensity to quote proverbs has become proverbial.) Pandaro is always ready to

believe the worst about human affections and expectations. On balance, the segments of the poem which reveal his private responses show Pandaro to be more interested in control and power over the lovers than in their love for each other or their love for him. As the action of the poem draws to a close, Pandaro is also going to be smitten by misfortune, but he does not foresee it. He too will be a loser when Criseida is gone; he will have no one left to manipulate or upon whom he can exercise his powers. With Criseida also goes his usefulness to Troiolo.

Pandaro's final speech in the poem is not surprising, given his past performance throughout the poem. He is still a psychic chameleon, taking on the emotional colouring of the soul nearest him.

> Pandaro sorrowfully listened to all this, and, realizing the truth of it, could find nothing to say. And whilst, on the one hand, love for his friend drew him to remain there, on the other shame at Criseida's wrongdoing kept prompting him to leave; and since he did not know what to do for the best, both these impulses caused him much misery.
>
> At last, in tears, he uttered these words: "Troiolo, I do not know what I can say to you. If it is as you say, I shall denounce her as strongly and as often as I can. And I shall not attempt to put forward any excuses for this great wickedness of hers, nor shall I ever try to visit her again, wherever she may be. What I did before, I did out of love for you, leaving aside all concern for my reputation.
>
> And if I did what you wanted, that is reward enough for me. I can do nothing about what is now happening and am just as distressed about it as you--and if I could see some means of setting it right, you may be sure I would embrace it eagerly. Leave it to God, who may act as he thinks fit, and whom I pray as earnestly as I can to punish her in such a way that she will not be able to commit another crime of this sort." (Il Fil VIII.22-24)

This is Pandaro's final fixing of the blame on Criseida and simultaneous exoneration of himself. Troiolo makes no reply to Pandaro's speech. Very soon after that, he goes into battle--without Pandaro at his side as promised--and gets himself killed.

The ultimate fate of Criseida remains unknown; we do not know if she is happy with Diomede, or how long she survives. Pandaro disappears into well-deserved oblivion, and Troiolo is killed. The only person to have survived is the narrator, who can hardly be considered as any kind of persona within the poem. He has survived, but has learned little of significance. He advises young men not to fall in love with young women. "A young woman," he says, "is both inconstant and eager for many lovers, and prizes her beauty more than her mirror warrants" (Il Fil VIII.30). It is a bitterly ironic passage, considering that the only praise Criseida ever heard directed at her was praise of her beauty. How could she not come to value it as her greatest asset?

To readers of Chaucer's Troilus, there are some obvious major changes Chaucer has wrought in the Filostrato. Both Troilus and Criseyde are much more interesting as characters than their Italian cousins, and Pandarus has grown in stature and importance to almost dominate the English work. Even the narrator, who will be the focus of the next chapter, has undergone major metamorphoses. Boccaccio has told a story much more interestingly than his sources had told it, but still without that subtle gradation of colours and nuance that we will see in Chaucer. Boccaccio, as we have seen, has by his own admission identified with the hero, thereby creating a single, narrow perspective. Chaucer, as a close reading of the Troilus shows, has created each of his characters with total empathy. We cannot read his poem from a single point of view.

The other change of significance which I will focus on in the next chapters is the difference in aims between Boccaccio and Chaucer. Boccaccio is a young man writing a courtly romance for his lady. Chaucer is a mature poet who is using the familiar vehicle of the Trojan story to

explore the very concepts of reading, writing, and interpreting. It is to this purpose that he has so greatly expanded the role of Pandarus. We have seen the germ of that characterization in Boccaccio; Chaucer will show us the full flowering of it.

NOTES

[1]Barry A. Windeatt, ed., Troilus and Criseyde by Geoffrey Chaucer (London: Longman, 1984), 84.

[2]Karl Young, The Origin and Development of the Story of Troilus and Criseyde (New York: Gordian Press, 1968), pp. 182-86.

[3]Young, p. 1.

[4]Nicholas R. Havely, Chaucer's Boccaccio (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980), pp. 167-68.

[5]F. N. Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside, 1957), p. 834.

[6]Mary-Elizabeth Meek, trans., Historia Destructionis Troiae, by Guido delle Colonne (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), p. 157.

[7]Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 129.

[8]Havely, p. 26. All subsequent references to the text of Il Filostrato will appear with Part and stanza numbers following the passage.

[9]C. S. Lewis, "What Chaucer Really Did to 'Il Filostrato,'" in Stephen A. Barney, ed., Chaucer's Troilus: Essays in Criticism (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1980), p. 39.

[10]George Lyman Kittredge, "Troilus," in Barney, p. 9.

[11]Young, pp. 43-57.

CHAPTER II

THE NARRATOR

In this chapter I intend to discuss in some detail the changes Chaucer makes in the Filostrato, with special attention to narrator's perspective, and to the expansion and transformation of the role of Pandarus, whose manipulations of Troilus and Criseyde reflect or parallel within the poem the author's manipulation of reader-response. Chaucer, through the narrator, uses both his text and his co-architect within the poem to accomplish his literary task. This task is not manipulation for its own sake; it is an exploration of the problems of communication, interpretation, and understanding between human beings who hear, speak, read, and write. As the narrator is nearest the reader in the hermeneutical circle, it seems appropriate to discuss him and his work first.[1]

Boccaccio, in the Proemio to Il Filostrato, has admitted the autobiographical elements in his work.[2] He is a young man, in love with a lady who has left town, and he suffers accordingly, identifying strongly with his hero, Troiolo. The story, in Boccaccio's version, is therefore told mainly from Troiolo's perspective, and it is a limited one. When Chaucer takes up the story he is forty-six and mature both as man and poet. If he identifies with anyone in the poem, it is with the narrator. His awareness of other possibilities, however, is made manifest in Pandarus, whose own creativity can be perceived as the dark side of Chaucer's own genius. Whereas Boccaccio's subject is the sad

story of Troiolo's love for, and abandonment by Criseida, Chaucer's subject is Meaning itself; the Trojan story is but its frame. This is best illustrated by reading Boccaccio's closing advice to his readers in Part VIII, and his commendation of his book, Part IX, to Filomena, and then comparing these to the three last stanzas of Troilus and Criseyde. There are enormous differences in authorial scope and narratorial perspective.

Part VIII of Il Filostrato ends with the author--no longer the narrator--advising young men not to love young women. He counsels them to love older women instead because they are more appreciative, take pleasure in loving, and are less likely to crave many lovers.[3] It is a limited and limiting conclusion, and it trivializes the romance. The final address of Part IX, to his book, is no more satisfying:

> And in the mournful guise you now wear I beg you by means of this other man's woes to let her know of my afflicted state, and of the laments, sighs and bitter weeping I have endured, and still suffer from, since her departure hid from me the bright beams of her lovely eyes. For it was their presence alone that brightened my life.[4]

The work has undergone hermeneutical closure, committed by its own author. The circle includes only Boccaccio and Filomena; as readers, we feel that the initial reason he gives for writing the poem has become barely plausible, as we no longer feel welcome in the piece.[5] We almost feel like unwilling parties to a lovers' private matter.

Now let us consider the last three stanzas of the Troilus:

> Lo here, of payens corsed olde rites,
> Lo here, what alle hire goddes may availle;
> Lo here, thise wrecched worldes appetites;
> Lo here, the fyn and guerdoun for travaille
> Of Love, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille;
> Lo here, the forme of olde clerkis speche
> In poetrie, if ye hire bokes seche.

O moral Gower, this book I directe
To the, and to the, philosophical Strode,
To vouchen-sauf, ther nede is, to correcte,
Of youre benignites and zeles goode;
And to that sothfast Crist that starf on rode,
With al myn herte of mercy evere I preye,
And to the lord right thus I speke and seye:

Thow oon, and two, and thre, eterne on lyve,
That regnest ay in thre, and two, and oon,
Uncircumscript, and al maist circumscrive,
Us from visible and in-visible foon
Defende, and to thy mercy, everichon,
So make us, Ihesus, for thi mercy digne,
ffor love of Mayde and moder thyn benigne. Amen.[6]
(TC V.1849-69)

The first of these three stanzas summarizes all that the poem purports to show us, and in one sense suggests closure. However, the dual dedications to Gower and Strode indicate concerns more universal and ongoing than personal and finite. Philosophical and poetic problems are never far from the surface of the poem, and in its final stanzas, they are expressed directly. John Gower wrote moral treatises and poetry, and Ralph Strode was a lawyer and a friend of Chaucer's who published against Wyclif, declaring that predestination and free will were mutually exclusive. (Chaucer has articulated part of Strode's argument in Troilus's Temple Soliloquy in Book IV of the Troilus.) The poem has expressed several philosophical and religious tensions in its characterizations and action, many of which remain unresolved at the end of the poem. In this way, Chaucer opens up the hermeneutical circle to all who "hire bokes seche."

The very powerful narrator, whose own role is greatly expanded from Boccaccio's, is different from Boccaccio's narrator in more ways than his age and maturity: he is humble, he is involved, and he is an interpretive force to be considered in different lights, depending upon

the circumstances of the particular passage being read, and upon the reader and his circumstances.

I want first to discuss the narrator's humility, which is apparent by the third stanza:

> For I, that God of Loves servantz serve,
> Ne dar to love, for myn unliklynesse,
> Preyen for speed, al sholde I ther-fore sterve,
> So fer am I from his help in derknesse;
> But natheles, if this may don gladnesse
> To any lovere and his cause availle,
> Have he my thonk, and myn be his travaille. (TC I.15-21)

If this were the only self-deprecatory remark, it could be dismissed as Chaucer's nod to the medieval convention of poetic modesty. But it is only one of many such comments which form part of the foundation on which Chaucer builds positive reader-response to his narrator. Those audience members who are not lovers will have, if not fellow-feeling for the narrator, at least the knowledge that he is no better off than they. His status also implies objectivity; and lovers who read his poem are assured of his altruism toward them. He has won the audience not by a revelation of his own virtue, but by admission of a personal shortcoming. By mentioning his "unliklynesse," he signals to the audience his self-awareness, and the concomitant pointlessness of his attempting to love, as well as the pointlessness of envying those who can dare to love. Aeschylus said, "Very few men have sufficient inborn grace to honour without envy a friend who has prospered."[7] Chaucer, a court poet, would have been very aware of the danger of arousing envy, and of the possibility that he, as narrator, in his poem, could be accused of envy. This in part accounts for what B. A. Windeatt has described with affection and accuracy as the "Bumbleninny" narrator.[8] The narrator's

modesty thus predisposes the whole audience favourably toward him, giving him greater credibility and greater power to manipulate reader-response. By suggesting that he is a fool, he allows his readers a deluded feeling of superiority.

The narrator has, in fact, become a recorder, translator, interpreter and evaluator of the text he is sharing with us. The narrator's persona is gifted with vision, but not with the power to alter the history with which he is dealing. In this respect, he is an opposite of Pandarus, who, within the poem, has been given power but not vision. By vision I mean both the ability to perceive the larger patterns of construction he is engaged in, and foresight to predict the consequences.

Like the narrator in The Parliament of Fowls, he is a scholar, not a lover. His learning is from authorities, represented by books, not from experience. In The Parliament of Fowls he says:

> But thus seyde he [Africanus], "Thow hast so wel born
> In lokynge of myn olde bok totorn,
> Of which Macrobye roughte not a lyte,
> That sumdel of thy labour wolde I quyte." (PF 109-12)

And, a little further on in the same work:

> [Africanus] seyde, "It stondeth writen in thy face,
> Thyn errour, though thow telle it not to me;
> But dred the not to come into this place,
> For this writyng nys nothyng ment bithe,
> Ne by non, but he Loves servaunt be:
> For thow of love hast lost thy tast, I gesse,
> As sek man hath of swete and bytternesse. (PF 155-61)

There are, predictably, some differences in these two narrators which help explain what Chaucer is doing with the Troilus narrator. The dreamer chosen by Africanus is being rewarded for his diligent scholarly study of the "olde bok totorn," and his learning comes from authorities,

not from experience. But he may have turned to books because he has lost his taste for love (although, as J. H. Fisher points out, not necessarily his desire).[9] There is some ambiguity in the dreamer's emotional evaluation of his situation. This is not at all the case with the Troilus narrator, who would clearly rather love, but does not dare, for his "unliklynesse." The Parliament narrator has made an equitable exchange. The Troilus narrator, however, has graciously accepted his fate and his stated role as the servant of Love's servants, without hope of a reward. He would indeed be in a low estate if the phrase "servant of Love's servants" did not parody one of the common epithets of the pope: the servant of the servants of God. The narrator may call himself the servant of Love's servants, but he is, paradoxically, in absolute, papal control.

The modesty of poetic convention accounts only partially for Chaucer's denials of his own creativity. The whole medieval tradition, based so much on the past and on the authorities of the past--secular as well as religious--did not value original work as later tradition tends to. Chaucer refers, in The Parliament of Fowls, to the value of older works:

> For out of olde feldes, as men seyth,
> Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere,
> And out of olde bokes, in good feyth,
> Cometh al this newe science that men lere. (PF 22-25)

In The Legend of Good Women as well, the narrator devotes the better part of the first hundred lines of his Prologue to praise of "olde bokes," and complaints about the difficulty of writing anything that is both new and good.[10] He varies this line of thought somewhat in the Troilus, however, making frequent complaints about the received text from which he claims

to be faithfully translating. Far more often than not, these complaints accompany a large segment that is clearly Chaucer's own creation. The complaint invariably focuses attention on the text with which the narrator claims to be burdened, and serves to remind the reader of possible different interpretations, the question of the reliability of the translator-cum-narrator, and the reliability of language itself. The reader ultimately becomes responsible for the meaning of the text.

Chaucer never takes for granted the reliability of words, and is certainly aware of the possible dangers and negative effects on the listener of an excess or deficiency of words: quantity and quality of words are both of great importance in producing meaning and effect. Chaucer develops the ability to produce a remarkable range of effects simply by varying the quantity of speech he assigns his characters. Some of his best comic effects are produced at the expense of characters who talk too much. The loquacious eagle in The House of Fame, the babbling dreamer in The Book of the Duchess, and Pandarus in Troilus and Criseyde are all characters who use words to excess. In The House of Fame the effect is highly comic; and in The Book of the Duchess, the sincerity of the dreamer's bumbling attempts at condolence is emphasized, adding a certain levity to an otherwise unrelentingly sad piece. In the Troilus, however, Pandarus's extended speeches have multiple effects: they are, to a degree, funny, inasmuch as they provoke witty rejoinders from both Criseyde and Troilus. It is at times possible to feel that Troilus speaks for the reader when he says the following lines to Pandarus:

> "I am nat deef; now pees, and crye namore,
> ffor I have herd thi wordes and thi lore;
> . . . . . .
> ffor thy proverbes may be naught availle.

. . . . . .
Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I the preye." (TC I.753-60)

These examples also demonstrate the tension abiding in Chaucer between authority and experience as ways to wisdom. Chaucer's demonstration of the corruption of texts in the hands of Pandarus will be looked at in detail in the next chapter. For now, it is more important to see Pandarus's long speeches as a means ~~by~~ which both Troilus and the narrator are made to appear in a better light by comparison to Pandarus. Pandarus loves to talk simply to hold an audience. Part of his sense of his own importance comes from the illusory power that all speakers have as they speak--a power which diminishes as the speech lengthens. The longer someone talks, the less likely we are to believe him; and the longer the string of arguments presented to us, the more suspicious we become of the presenter's motives. Chaucer uses this human trait both ways. When Pandarus and Criseyde, and even on occasion Troilus, speak, we judge their sincerity partly by the length of their speech. As Pandarus himself says (after a very long speech):

> How so it be that som men hem delite
> With subtyl art hire tales forto endite,
> Yet for al that, in hire entencioun,
> Hire tale is al for som conclusioun. (TC II.256-59)

Conversely, the narrator's speeches are usually kept quite short: a stanza here, a line there suffices to make his points and at the same time maintain the narrator's pose of humility.

The narrator's humility is itself a manipulation of reader-response; it manipulates the reader into a position which makes further manipulation easier if not inevitable. This pattern is visible in high relief in Pandarus's manipulations of the lovers, as the next chapter

will demonstrate. The further manipulation of the reader is sometimes direct, sometimes indirect. Sometimes it is accomplished by the judicious presence or absence in or from the narrative. There are dozens of authorial intrusions in the Troilus, excluding the proemia heading the first four books of the poem. These can hardly be called intrusions into the poem because they are often so distinctly separate from the action of the poem. They are, however, as vital to the working of the poem as those intrusions of the author which occur within the poem proper. I wish to look carefully at these proemia, for they reveal the narrator and his work of manipulation quite clearly.

As a group, the proemia are rather like choruses in Greek drama, with the exception that they are spoken by the director-cum-narrator of the drama that we, as an audience, are involved in. The director has come out and come down offstage to discuss the action of the play with the audience. The action has temporarily ceased, and the director is now working with his audience, preparing it for the next act. He makes the usual complaints of directors--about bad scripts and the difficulties of translations, all the while drawing the audience completely into his sphere of influence. The technique varies from proem to proem, and each invokes a different muse, but all are, in different ways, fine examples of the narrator's manipulation of reader-response.

The first proem features, in its initial stanza, an invocation to Thesiphone, one of the three Furies whose task it is to mete out punishment to mortals who have offended the gods. The Furies are usually depicted weeping as they harry their charges. There is undoubtedly some identification of the narrator with this sad figure of judgment who is neither deity nor muse, but minion, and whose duty is as onerous as the

narrator's, who weeps as he writes. This narrator, if we can judge by the proem, is going to be intensely involved in the book to follow. It would also appear, from his promise of altruism to lovers, and his speech about love in the proem, that he will be very sympathetic to Troilus, whose "double sorwe" he is going to tell. What happens in the first book, and elsewhere, is not quite what we might expect.

The first book of the poem really belongs to Troilus. Pandarus does not appear until line 548, and we get only a glimpse of Criseyde; she says nothing. The narratorial treatment of Troilus is very different from that given Criseyde, as we see later in the poem. When he is telling what happens to Troilus, the narrator is absent from the narrative, or we are not conscious of him. Book I contains very few authorial intrusions, and none are made for the purpose of garnering the reader's sympathy for the hero. Reader-response to Troilus appears to be manipulated by the narrator from a distance so great it amounts to absence. This is the initial suggestion that the narrator is not of the hero's party. We already have the feeling that Chaucer's creation of Troilus is a little like the creation story in Genesis. There is no explicit indication in either case that the creator loves the creation sufficiently to protect and champion it. Adam and Troilus share the quality of being sufficient to stand, but free to fall.

In creating the character of Troilus, however, Chaucer wisely avoids too much similarity to Boccaccio's hero, Troiolo, who is much less a Trojan knight than an urban Italian renaissance youth. The latter type may not have found favour with an English audience, given the times and the political climate of Chaucer's England.[11] Those familiar with Troilus's Italian counterpart will recognize some subtle personality

changes and some upgrading of moral qualities. Troiolo knows about sex, but not about love; Troilus knows about neither. Troiolo seems almost proud of his suffering; Troilus really does try to contain his misery (Pandarus has to shake it out of him physically). Troiolo mocks his friends who fall in love, to other common friends, recalling a pattern of pride going before a fall. Troilus merely teases--directly--the friends of his who have succumbed to love. It is this last difference which Chaucer expands and exploits. Troilus's mockery of love is an offense to the god of love. This difference not only helps to universalize the poem, it makes Troilus's suffering much less self-indulgent than Troiolo's. Chaucer has also taken the opportunity at this point in his translation to add some six--Boccaccio used two--stanzas on the nature of love. The narrator addresses both the world at large and the immediate audience (I.211-59); the message is "That Love is he that alle thing may bynde,/ ffor may no man fordon the lawe of kynde" (I.237-38). The declaration is absolute; all mankind is subject to the law of nature. So, what happens to Troilus is of concern to all of us. It is a long speech, containing several proverbs, but, because Pandarus has not yet appeared, the reader is less likely to be sceptical of its intent.

Chaucer's improvements on Troiolo, however, are admittedly a removal or diminution of negative traits, rather than the addition of positive ones. The central fact about Troilus that emerges from Book I is that he is essentially a passive character. This passivity is to reach comic dimension more than once in the poem. As Gerry Brenner has remarked:

> The rise of Troilus is rendered in comic terms, his effeminate courtship climaxing when Pandarus has to pitch him into bed with Criseyde. And since in the ascending action Chaucer has

> set Troilus's heroic stature partly in comic terms, his decline ultimately resists a tragic interpretation. That is, his poignant lamentations all too strongly echo his comic self-indulgence, thereby dissociating the reader from full participation in Troilus's decline.[12]

There are several instances, in different parts of the poem, where the narrator subtly reveals more than the indifference indicated by the detached narrative. Sometimes it is more a matter of tone than text, sometimes it is only apparent when contrasted with the narrator's treatment of Criseyde in a similar set of circumstances, and sometimes, as in the following instance, it is a matter of placement of text. At line 393, the narrative of Troilus's first sorrow is interrupted by the narrator, who introduces Petrarch's Sonnet 88, presenting it as the work of his "auctour called Lollius." Such an interruption pays humorous homage to Petrarch and the tradition, but at the same time undercuts any claims to uniqueness in Troilus's suffering and lessens the immediacy of the narrative of the hero's emotional life. When, at the end of the first book, the narrator says, "Now lat us stynte of Troilus a stounde," the reader is not fearful of losing contact with the character. On the contrary, he feels something akin to relief.

The second proem is to be examined in more detail, as it reveals the narrator at his most directly manipulative. In the first stanza, he re-establishes contact with the audience, outside the action of the poem but still very much as its involved narrator. We are reminded of Troilus's despair, and of the difficulty of writing good poetry:

> Owt of thise blake waves forto saylle,
> O wynde, O wynde, the weder gynneth clere,
> ffor in this see the boot hath swych travaylle
> Of my konnyng that unneth I it steere:

> This see clepe I the tempestous matere
> Of disespeir that Troilus was inne--
> But now of hope the kalendes bygynne. (TC II.1-7)

It is to be noted that the natural scansion of these lines places stress on all the first personal pronouns, emphasizing the statements that it is his responsibility to tell the tale, and it will be his choices of metaphor. The speech is not so much self-conscious, or even self-absorbed, as it is reflective of the poet absorbed in his work. In the first stanza, the narrator begins apostrophizing the wind and ends addressing the audience. The second stanza begins with an invocation to Cleo, the muse of history. Unlike the first invocation, to Tesiphone, there is, by implication, a much less emotionally charged set of circumstances prevailing. Also, by the introduction of history's muse, history and its distancing and impartiality are subtly introduced to the readers' minds. The narrator is present but not as obviously involved in what he has to tell us:

> O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
> Thow be my speed fro this forth, and my Muse,
> To ryme wel this book til I have do;
> Me nedeth here noon othere art to use.
> ffor-whi to every lovere I me excuse
> That of no sentement I this endite,
> But out of Latyn in my tonge it write. (TC II.8-14)

He makes his task sound so simple; all he has to do is translate from Latin. This stanza is deliberately delusive, considering that more is added to this Book of the Troilus than to any other. There are several obvious, deliberate inconsistencies here. There is nothing historical in the poem; if he were translating it he would be translating not from Latin but from Italian, or perhaps French; none of his main sources of the Troilus were in Latin. And, tucked between those modest

misrepresentations is the claim that he does not know love from experience. This is possibly a deliberate attempt to raise the question in the reader's mind just how much does the narrator know of love, and is it information from authorities and books, or is it wisdom won from experience? He maintains the stance of the scholar, amid some obvious untruths. He is also excusing himself to lovers, whom he might unavoidably offend by his simple translation; in doing so, he raises another question: can anything ever be perfectly translated, so that every nuance is preserved in the new language?

As the proem continues, the narrator's disclaimers of involvement increase. He continues to sue for translator's immunity in the third stanza:

> Wherfore I nyl have neither thank ne blame
> Of al this werk, but prey you mekely,
> Disblameth me if any word be lame,
> ffor as myn auctour seyde, so sey I;
> Ek though I speeke of love unfelyngly,
> No wondre is, for it no thyng of newe is:
> A blynd man kan nat juggen wel in hewis. (TC II.15-21)

The message here actually goes beyond the plea to spare the messenger; he is almost denying his ability to understand the message. If what he says in the proverb were true of him, he would be totally incapable of translating even at a basic, literal level. The proverb is nonetheless apt; it reminds us that some men who can see cannot distinguish colours: there are degrees and kinds of blindness, and that applies to interpretation of what we read as well as what we see. The stanza has a strangely unreliable-sounding manner of suggesting objectivity.

The second proem is preoccupied with the dissociation of the narrator from the events he is forced to relate in the coming book. The

text of the remaining four stanzas talks about changes in language and meanings of words over a thousand years, the differences in language in different countries, different customs--"In sondry londes, sondry ben usages" (II.28)--and different interpretations depending on the individual interpreting. The narrator has considered these hermeneutical factors, and would like his audience to do the same. There is in the proem a sense of the narrator's presence, as he refers to "any lovere in this place" (II.30) and "in this place thre/ That have in love seid like and don in al" (II.43-44). But even stronger than the sense of the narrator's presence is the sense of his wanting to divorce himself from his narrative. This dissociation is in part aided by the sheer bulk of the proem. It acts as a cushion or buffer between the narrative and the narrator, and between the narrative and the reader.

At the end of the proem, the narrator says, "but syn I have bigonne,/ Myn auctour shal I folwen if I konne" (II.48-49). But he does not seem eager. There are some strong reasons why Chaucer (not the narrator) may have approached this book of the poem with some trepidation. It is, contrary to the narrator's repeated claims, the most original, created part of the Troilus, and given Chaucer's respect for "olde bokes" and their authors, he is not about to take lightly the creation of any original work. Secondly, as the poem is progressing, he is probably increasingly aware of the unconventionality of his own interpretive position, especially regarding the two lovers. But there is a third, and probably, if we may speculate on Chaucer's mental processes, more important reason than either of the two afore-mentioned. I said earlier that the first book of the poem "belongs" to Troilus. In it, we meet and get to know him, and to witness his first fall. The second book belongs

primarily to Pandarus, whose ascent we will witness, and secondarily to Criseyde, upon whose descent Pandarus's rise is contingent.

Unlike the first deceptively warm and welcoming proem of Book I, the proem to Book II accurately forecasts the narrator's behavior within the second book. The number and nature of authorial intrusions is minimal; the few there are have little to do with Pandarus directly. They are more often the narrator's attempts to defend Criseyde against anticipated negative reader-response. One effect of the relative absence of the narrator in Book II is that Pandarus is free to manipulate the lovers. Pandarus must be allowed to work unhindered by the narrator, whose power is far greater than Pandarus's, but at this point must not appear to be. Any suspense generated in the poem is generated by Pandarus.

Certain characteristics of Pandarus suggest that his creator was very concerned with the question of which is the more valuable: learning from books or learning from experience? Pandarus has clearly swallowed a multitude of proverbs and has even read a little philosophy. He regurgitates the proverbs in large groups, and the philosophy comes out garbled. He has actually begun to reveal some of his character even before the end of Book I. His first act is a manipulation, or an attempt at the manipulation of Troilus by driving away depression with anger. Almost immediately after failing to do that, he adopts a sympathetic pose: "This Pandare, [that] neigh malt for sorwe and routhe" (I.582). The normal sequence of these two reactions would be the reverse of the way Pandarus has behaved: most good friends would feel and express pity first, and then perhaps try the other technique much later, if at all. His exclamation, when he is about to learn Troilus's secret, confirms

some unpleasant suspicions about Pandarus's character:

> "Aha," quod Pandare, "here bygynneth game."
> And with that word he gan hym for to shake,
> And seyde, "Thef, thow shalt hire name telle." (TC I.868-70)

In no way can such speech or behavior be construed as friendship: at best, it is prying; at worst, prurience. Pandarus' reaction, so spontaneous and so extreme, reveals the enormous pleasure he takes in the game of meddling. We know, if Troilus does not, that Pandarus is not planning to take Troilus's tender feelings too seriously.

Part of what Chaucer is doing with his characterization of Pandarus is showing his readers the range of possibilities of creative behavior. Chaucer and his other representative in the poem, the narrator, are both seen in a much more flattering light when compared to Pandarus, whose vast creative energies are put to such questionable use. For the most part, the narrator is not directly involved in manipulating our feelings about Pandarus; he makes almost no direct comments to the audience about Pandarus. Pandarus's character is so active, so powerful, and he is such a fast talker, that he seems to take over the second book, sweeping aside any resistance with his torrents of words. He has, in fact, gained control of Troilus in this manner even before the second book opens, and it is part of the technique he will use on Criseyde in the second book. Not even the narrator dares to interrupt him.

The amplification of Pandarus's character--from Boccaccio's Pandaro--is accomplished in part by the expansion of all of Pandarus's speeches, most of which are allowed to flow uninterrupted by his listeners and by the narrator. One effect of these long speeches is the disappearance of the narrator from the reader's consciousness. Pandarus

thereby assumes complete dominance when he is present. The odd comment that the narrator does make is usually ambiguous. At the beginning of the book, the narrator offers up a little prayer to Janus, the two-faced god of entrances and beginnings: "Now Janus, god of entree, thow hym gyde!" (II.77). The narrator is then invisible until line 666; at this point he appears, ostensibly for the purpose of defending Criseyde from "goosshish poeples . . . That dremen thynges which that nevere were" (III.584-85).

> Now myghte som envious jangle thus:
> "This was a sodeyn love; how myght it be
> That she so lightly loved Troilus
> Right for the firste syghte, ye, parde?"
> . . . . . .
> ffor I sey nought that she so sodeynly
> yaf hym hire love, but that she gan enclyne
> To like hym first, and I have told yow whi. (TC II.666-74)

Of course, by suggesting such possibilities, the narrator himself is inviting his readers to "demen thyng they nevere er thought" (III.763). Intrusions such as the one above complicate our responses to both the narrator and his subject. The narrator purports to be guiding the reader's interpretation--in this case of Criseyde--to a mean, that is, neither an excess nor a deficiency of pity for Criseyde. What he is really doing, as an agent of Chaucer, here and elsewhere in the poem, is forcing the reader to see the full range of possibilities for behavior and interpretations of it. No judgment we make about any of the characters or their actions can be easily arrived at or, having been reached, remain unqualified.

The importance of our interpretations of the poem is paralleled within the poem by the importance that the characters attach to public opinion of their actions. Chaucer has emphasized this much more than

Boccaccio has, perhaps in order to make the reader more conscious of the process of interpretation. One of Criseyde's greatest fears is the fear of public disgrace. Pandarus uses that as a way to force her to silence when he is about to admit Troilus to her bedchamber: "Quod Pandarus, 'that ye swich folye wrought; They myghte demen thyng they nevere er thought.'" He has used it previously, in his initial encounter with her. He threatens to kill himself, and her reaction--also her first major error--is to prevent him from leaving. Her chief reason is fear of what people will say:

> [Criseyde] thoughte thus: "unhappes fallen thikke
> Alday for love, and in swych manere cas,
> As men ben cruel in hem self and wikke;
> And if this man sle here hym self, allas,
> In my presence, it wol be no solas.
> What men wolde of it deme I kan nat seye;
> It nedeth me ful sleighly forto pleie." (TC II.456-62)

There is a hint here that public opinion is of greater importance than the reality of chastity for Criseyde, given by the use of the ambiguous word "pleie." In one sense, the city of Troy is an audience as well, whose responses must be consciously manipulated by Pandarus, Criseyde and Troilus. In Criseyde's case, this concern with public opinion is more a matter of realism than adherence to the courtly code of secrecy in love. Her very survival, as David Aers has pointed out, is dependent upon the goodwill of the important members of the community.[13]

Chaucer as narrator has defended Criseyde in an earlier passage of straight narrative, with a concise argument in her favour.

From the scene (II.610-51) in which Criseyde first sees Troilus riding by and says, "Who yaf me drynke?" (II.651), the narrator seems to become quite genuinely protective of Criseyde, hovering close to her even

as she dreams. When he does take leave of her, it is only after a lengthy interior monologue which he claims to be translating from his "auctour" (II.700). The interior argument of Boccaccio's Criseida is eighty lines; Chaucer has expanded Criseyde's to a hundred and seventy-five; with the expansion comes a great deal more complexity of characterization. Criseyde is all that her Italian counterpart is, and much more. She finds herself attracted by Troilus, but she considers all the social factors as well.

We feel we are following the narrator as he follows Criseyde down the stairs and out into the garden to hear Antigone's song. But after the song, it is as if he turns to us to remind us of what his author is about, all the while carefully concealing Chaucer, of course. He juxtaposes two stanzas which both deal with poetry itself. Antigone finishes her song, and Criseyde responds as follows:

> Criseyde unot that purpos naught answerde,
> But seyde, "ywys, it wol be nyght as faste."
> But every word which that she of hire herde,
> She gan to prenten in hire herte faste,
> And ay gan love hire lasse for tagaste
> Than it dide erst and synken in hire herte,
> That she wex somwhat able to converte.
>
> The dayes honour and the hevenes eye,
> The nyghtes foo--al this clepe I the sonne-- (TC II.897-905)

The first stanza above reinforces what has become apparent earlier in this book, that is, Criseyde's susceptibility to a good bit of creative writing. She has listened to Pandarus's story about how he came to know of Troilus's love for her, and when Pandarus ends his narrative with an impertinent suggestion, she laughs. Now, after she hears Antigone's song, the words are imprinted "in hire herte faste." It is the poetry which has reached her heart. Immediately, the narrator then comes even further

out of the poem and appears to be addressing the audience in the stanza which begins, "The dayes honour." He is reminding us, by calling attention to his own metaphor, that he is the poet, not the translator, who is creating by his own "process" the emotional response in us.

After Criseyde has received Troilus's letter, she writes him a reply. But, unlike Boccaccio, Chaucer has chosen not to let us see it. The narrator says, "Of which to telle in short is myn entente/ Th'effect as fer as I kan understonde" (II.1219-20), so that the audience gets the impression once again that the narrator may be trying to protect Criseyde, or at least protect her privacy. It is a lead-up to the next significant narratorial intrusion which follows the exchange of letters, and Criseyde's sighting of Troilus in the street for the second time:

> God woot if he ~~sat~~ on his hors aright,
> Or goodly was biseyn that ilke day!
> God woot wher he was lik a manly knyght!
> What sholde I drecche or telle of his aray?
> Criseyde, which that alle thise thynges say,
> To telle in short, hire liked al in fere,
> His persoun, his aray, his look, his chere,
>
> His goodly manere, and his gentilesse,
> So wel that nevere, sith that she was born,
> Ne hadde she swych routh of his destresse;
> And how so she hath hard ben here byforn,
> To god hope I she hath now kaught a thorn,
> She shal nat pulle it out this nexte wyke--
> God sende mo swich thornes on to pike. (TC II.1261-74)

There are several significant items in this passage. The first is the obvious unimportance of Troilus himself. The emphasis is on Criseyde's reaction and upon the narrator's wished-for reaction in Criseyde. He really wants Criseyde to find Troilus sexually appealing, because it will make it so much easier for her to do what she really has no choice but to do. There is no suggestion of celestial, spiritual, or even courtly love;

the extended double entendre (ll. 1272-74) makes clear the plain sexual intent. There is an echo of this sentiment later, in Book III, when the narrator addresses the audience and says, "For love of God, take every woman hede/ To werken thus, yf it come to the nede" (III.1224-25). Both passages are open to several interpretations, and both hint at a personal wish of the narrator that women in general were a little less 'daungerous.' The implication in the passage quoted from Book II is that Criseyde likes what she sees. We may deduce that the inner workings of Criseyde's mind --and heart--are not easily known, even by Criseyde herself. Even the narrator's comments are not always consistent, and at times we perceive Criseyde as much a fourteenth-century woman as a woman of the mythic past. David Aers has expounded this view with convincing evidence, claiming as well that Chaucer has "used the romance genre and conventions of courtly literature to explore the tensions between the place women occupied in society and the various self-images presented to them."[14]

The second book ends with Troilus lying in bed at Deiphebus's house, awaiting a visit from Criseyde. The narrator addresses the lovers present, as if to invite their comment on the situation: "But now to yow, ye loveres that ben here,/ Was Troilus nought in a kankedort?" (II.1751-52). But lovers cannot agree with the narrator; from their viewpoint, Troilus is in a great position. It is only those who have never loved who could agree with the narrator. But the narrator, playing the innocent fool here, has again reminded his readers that interpretation is very dependent on the experience that the reader brings to the text.

The third proem is equal in length to the second. It is a hymn of praise rather than an invocation, to Venus, goddess of love. Its rapturous exaltation of the "love of kynde" to a celestial level leads

the reader to expect a ravishingly poetic celebration of the consummation to follow. The narrator appears to be completely unaware that Pandarus, throughout the second book, has lowered the celestial, spiritual love which Troilus, and perhaps Criseyde, have felt, to the "love of kynde." By the time the consummation approaches, the two lovers seem to lose the ability to distinguish the two. This merging of the spiritual and erotic is appropriate, if we can believe that their feelings are mutual. This being the case, natural reader expectation and hope are for the affair to be a happy one, mutually gratifying at all levels. The proem holds promise of just such a union. The third book ought to belong to the lovers and, in part, it does.

What happens in the third book, in terms of the narrator and the audience, is a less readily defined but more intimate interaction than in either of the first two books. The number of authorial intrusions doubles in this book, and the references to a received text also increase markedly. The narrator also reveals more clearly and more frequently his attitude to the lovers. He and Pandarus still seem to be functioning in separate universes. The narrator reports on Pandarus's actions and speeches, but offers little or no comment upon them. We are left to our own interpretations, and these must become increasingly negative, as his manipulations of the lovers, Criseyde in particular, begin to lose any of their pretence of delicacy and enter the realm of animal husbandry:

> And Pandarus that ledde hire by the lappe,
> Come ner and gan in at the curtyn pike,
> And seyde, "god do boot on alle syke!
> Se who is here yow comen to visite;
> Lo, here is she that is youre deth to wite. (TC III.59-63)
> . . . . . .
> Ther-with his manly sorwe to biholde,
> It myghte han made an herte of stoon to rewe,

> And Pandare wep as he to water wolde,
> And poked evere his Nece new and newe,
> And seyde, "wo bygon ben hertes trewe;
> ffor love of god, make of this thinge an ende,
> Or sle us both at ones, er ye wende." (TC III.113-119)

The third book is greatly expanded from the comparable part of the Filostrato. Chaucer has added the whole incident of Troilus and Criseyde's meeting at Deiphebus's house. Troilus's illness, either real or feigned, is not only a good excuse for Pandarus to get Criseyde to visit Troilus, it is an opportunity for Chaucer to explore the varieties of interpretation which can be put on those important words in the courtly code, "mercy," "routhe," and "pity." Through Criseyde's actions, we see the absurdities of a tradition which includes a woman's sexual surrender to a man because she feels something akin to pity for him. This idea will be examined further in the next chapter, since it involves Pandarus quite directly.

The narrator is very obviously present during what must be the longest foreplay in the history of English literature. He digresses from his narrative of it to describe (ll. 1317-20) his own feelings as he describes the scene, and claims that he cannot describe this night as well as his "auctour of his excellence" (III.1325). The scene is actually a greatly expanded version of what Boccaccio takes only a few lines to tell. The interruption of almost thirty lines (1310-37) emphasizes the narrator's humility, but also stresses the importance of readers placing their own interpretation on his words:

> But soth is, though I kan nat tellen al,
> As kan myn auctour of his excellence,
> Yet have I seyd, and god to-forn, and shal
> In every thyng al holly his sentence;
> And if that ich, at loves reverence,
> Have eny word in-eched for the beste,
> Doth therwith-al right as youre selven leste.

> ffor myne wordes, heere and every parte,
> I speke hem alle under correccioun
> Of you that felyng han in loves arte,
> And putte it al in youre discrecioun
> To encresse or maken dymynucioun
> Of my langage, and that I yow biseche--
> But now to purpos of my rather speche. (TC III.1324-37)

The placement of this denial of his own reliability would seem to be a deliberate suggestion to readers to invent their own texts. He, the narrator, has only tried to imagine the best words to describe love in the best possible way. What is going on at a more subtle level is that he is making us all aware that, while we may be resentful of Pandarus's ambiguous presence in this scene, we also are present. We are brought up short by the realization that no one can ever really know what goes on behind closed doors, and that we can only speculate.

In the case of Troilus and Criseyde, we may well speculate that what goes on is good or pleasant. But almost immediately after the consummation comes the highly controversial 'morning-after' scene between Criseyde and Pandarus, which allows for the worst possible interpretation. Whether we believe that incest actually occurs or not, we are reading what is, as Evan Carton has pointed out, "the consummate instance of evasive language. Here, more inexorably than anywhere else in the poem, the reader is responsible for the meaning he produces; and that, I believe, is the meaning of the scene."[15] This scene will also be dealt with in the following chapter, as it relates directly to Pandarus and his manipulations.

The proem of the fourth book reveals again a very involved narrator, reminiscent of the first book's proem. He writes of Troilus's coming misfortune,

> For which ryght now myn herte gynneth blede,
> And now my penne, allas, with which I write,
> Quaketh for drede of that I moste endite. (TC IV.12-14)

The proem also declares the narrator's loyalty to Criseyde, whose desertion of Troilus he must report.

> ffor how Criseyde Troilus for-sook--
> Or at the leeste how that she was unkynde--
> Moot hennes-forth ben matere of my book,
> As writen folk thorugh which it is in mynde.
> Allas, that they sholde evere cause fynde
> To speke hire harm, and if they on hire lye,
> I-wis, hem self sholde han the vilanye. (TC IV.15-21)

He seems to be saying that it is enough to tell the facts of her story; she should not be maligned or lied about. We may expect from the proem, then, the narrator's explanation of Criseyde's actions which will at least mitigate their seriousness, if not exonerate her completely. We get no such explanation in the book; the narrator has fooled us again. The only clue to the nature of this fourth book is the invocation to Mars and the Furies. It is a credit to the narrator that the reader-response manipulations he has conducted on Criseyde's behalf have made us sympathetically disposed toward her. Our pity for her must now increase in the fourth book. She has been abandoned by her father; Troilus makes no gallant move to save her; Pandarus has betrayed her and is no more helpful now; and the Trojan women come in ignorant good will to plague her with comfort. She has even been abandoned by her narrator. And her fearfulness and solitary state have been stressed throughout the poem.

The narrator's appearances in Book IV are infrequent but very important. The effect produced by this is an acceleration of the action (compared with the leisurely, long interruption of the consummation scene in Bk. III); the narrative is almost uninterrupted and inexorable. There

is much dialogue, but now, even Pandarus is less verbose. It is as if the narrator wishes to get over this difficult part of his story as quickly as possible. In this book, the action is moved out of the bedroom, into the parliament, and into the streets, except for Troilus's brief retreat home to bed, and the last night that he spends with Criseyde at her house. This is the book in which the final mistakes are made by all the principal players in this drama. The narrator dares not interfere with the process which is inevitable; the basic story must unfold as it has been written by Chaucer's "auctour." Suggestions are made, by Pandarus, surprisingly, which would, if followed, ensure everyone's happiness, but these suggestions are all rejected in favour of cowardly submission to fate. None of the characters can make a gesture of honesty, let alone greatness. The reader is allowed to feel the full shock and dismay at the impending separation of such happy lovers.

The story is rescued from the personal grief which threatens to overwhelm by Troilus's soliloquy in the temple. The reader is returned to a more universal set of concerns, and to the realization that the narrator's story must proceed as it is; it is pre-destined in its own way. Of course the philosophical ruminations of Troilus have their comic as well as cosmic importance. It appears that Troilus will do anything to avoid a confrontation with the problems facing him. Criseyde is about to be sent away, and he goes to the temple to contemplate free will and predestination. There is no comparable passage in the Filostrato; Boccaccio's narrative hurries along at this point. The deceleration of action accomplished by Troilus's 140-line soliloquy is temporary, just long enough for the reader to contemplate the action just past, and once again lament Troilus's blindness.

The narrator's intrusions are still relatively sparse but beginning to increase. There are several which consist of the narrator saying, "as I shal yow devyse," or some similar phrase, just to keep us conscious of him. His important interruptions are mostly to direct reader-response toward Criseyde. The first example of this is the way he deals with the two lovers' griefs. He gives a very full account of Troilus's agony, comparable in length to the one in the first book. The passage is again a fairly close translation of Boccaccio; however, the extreme reaction has been retained for an effect quite different from that which Boccaccio intended. Boccaccio also describes Criseida in her agony with equally lurid detail, but Chaucer accords Criseyde considerably more dignity:

> How myghte it evere y-red ben or y-songe,
> The pleynte that she made in hire destresse?
> I not; but as for me, my litel tonge,
> If I discryven wolde hire hevynesse,
> It sholde make hire sorwe seme lesse
> Than that it was, and childishly deface
> Hire heigh compleynte, and therfor ich it pace.
> (TC IV.799-805)

The reason the narrator declines to describe the wild outpourings of grief as Boccaccio has is that contrast is needed between Troilus's reaction and Criseyde's. Troilus's decline is not as tragic as Criseyde's, and that is emphasized by this and other contrasts. The narrator's last important intrusion in Book IV comes just after her long speech to Troilus (IV.1261 ff.), which has begun with the line, "I am a womman, as ful wel ye wot." Criseyde, incidentally, takes for granted that no man, not even Troilus, will credit her with much intelligence. She accordingly attempts to convince Troilus by telling him that her intuition is responsible for what she is about to say. We, as readers,

have witnessed her thought processes all through the first four books, and they have seemed easily as rational as Troilus's. The narrator, however, is more concerned with the defense of her character, as the following lines demonstrate:

> And trewelyche, as writen wel I fynde,
> That al this thyng was seyd of good entente;
> And that hire herte trewe was and kynde
> Towardes hym and spak right as she mente,
> And that she starf for wo neigh whan she wente,
> And was in purpos evere to be trewe:
> Thus writen they that of hire werkes knewe. (TC IV.1415-21)

If any generalization can be made about the narrator's manipulations in the fourth book, it is that he allows the characters to reveal themselves and advance the story by long stretches of uninterrupted dialogue and a considerable number of uninterrupted narrative lines, especially in the case of Troilus.

The fifth book of the Troilus has no proem separate and distinct from the narrative itself. What little proem there is--it is really only one stanza--is a brief dedication to the Parcae, the three Fates. This trio of mythical ladies is known for its impartiality, unlike the three Furies, one of whom the narrator has invoked at the outset of Book I. But he refers to the Parcae as "angry," a probable reflection of his own involvement with the story.

The narrator's involvement in this last book increases markedly. There are more than four times the number of narratorial intrusions in this book as in any of the other four. It is as if the narrator has plunged into the story himself to try to forestall, prevent, or at least soften the reader's judgment of Criseyde. He pulls out all the stops, doing everything short of changing the line of the story. The nearer he

comes to the ineluctable fact of Criseyde's desertion, the more he interrupts.

The first interruption, however, concerns Troilus, not Criseyde:

> Who koude telle aright or ful discryve
> His wo, his pleynt, his languore and his pyne?
> Naught alle the men that han or ben on lyve.
> Thow redere, maist thi self ful wel devyne
> That swich a wo my wit kan nat diffyne.
> On ydel forto write it sholde I swynke,
> Whan that my wit is wery it to thynke. (TC V.267-73)

This address to the reader is a subtle reminder of the opening lines of the poem, but it is hardly in keeping with the original intent, "the double sorwe of Troilus to tellen." The narrator has said, not very long before this, that he will not describe Criseyde's sorrow because it would childishly deface or insult the seriousness of her grief. His reason here is that the task is overwhelming to contemplate. This passage has to be ironic, considering the circumstances of the lovers at this point. He has just described the situation: Criseyde is alone in a hostile camp with only her very unreliable father to protect her from an invading host of strangers. Troilus is alone in his room at the palace, lying on his bed (again) waiting for Pandarus to come and comfort him. The reader can draw his own conclusions as to which of the two is in the worse "kankedort."

The narrator, considering his alleged loyalties to Troilus, is remarkably kind to Diomede. In fact, now that Troilus is compared to a man other than Pandarus, who is utterly reprehensible, he looks worse than ever before, and Diomede begins to look good. The narrative passages about Diomede praise him for virtues which Troilus so obviously lacks: "This Diomede, as bokes us declare,/ Was in his nedes prest and corageous";

and there is more. He combines the energy of Pandarus and the passion of Troilus.

It is important to trace the narrator's argument in support of Criseyde: this is best done by looking at some of his intrusions into the narrative. The list is long, but particular attention must be paid to the close proximity of the line numbers which accompany each example.

1. And save hire browes joyneden yfere,
   Ther nas no lakke in aught I kan espien;
   But forto speken of hire eyen cleere,
   Lo, trewely, they writen that hire syen,
   That Paradis stood formed in hire eyen;
   And with hire riche beaute evere more
   Strof love in hire ay which of hem was more.
   . . . . . .
   Charitable, estatlich, lusty and fre,
   Ne nevere mo ne lakked hire pite:
   Tendre herted, slydynge of corage--
   But trewely I kan nat telle hire age. (TC V.813-26)

This description of Criseyde comes extremely late in the poem, sandwiched metaphorically between physical descriptions of Diomede and Troilus. It comes as a revelation, the first apparent attempt at objectivity in describing this woman. She is at last seen, with real, identifiable features, not just as the "bright sterre . . . under cloude blak" (I.175). We do not see her, just as we do not see the two men, through lovers' eyes. Paradise may indeed stand "formed in hire eyen," but above those eyes resides a solid, epicene brow, a physical flaw, perhaps metaphorical of a moral one. The description is disarmingly honest. She is "tendre-herted, slyding of corage." The one thing he will not reveal is her age.

The next manipulatory intervention occurs indirectly with Diomede's very persuasive speech. He leads into it gradually (ll. 850-68), and continues with a recorded speech (ll. 871-945). The narrator then

says, to the audience:

> 2. What sholde I telle his wordes that he seyde?
> He spak i-nough for o day at the meeste.
> It preveth wel, he spak so that Criseyde
> Graunted on the morwe at his requeste
> For to speken with hym at the leeste. (TC V.946-50)

Everything about this man is in sharp contrast to Troilus. Compare the above with Troilus's response to Criseyde in the temple, and afterward. There are many reasons arising out of the narrative which would allow logically for Criseyde's change of heart. He knows how to court a lady, he is every bit the knight Troilus is, and he is, from the description, very handsome. He also offers Criseyde protection.

> 3. And after this, the sothe for to seyn,
> Hire glove he tok, of which he was ful feyn. (TC V.1012-13)

There is some regret implied in the phrase "the sothe for to seyn," but here we must guess that Criseyde has not objected to the taking of her glove, if she has not actually given it to Diomede. This incident does not appear in Boccaccio, but Chaucer's earlier sources, Benoit and Guido, are not in agreement about the circumstances surrounding it. Regardless, the most important phrase in the passage is "the sothe for to seyn," as the next narratorial intrusion shows. Diomede emerges from Criseyde's tent "whan it was woxen eve," the hour at which, as the French say, no one ever fell out of love. Criseyde then goes to her father's tent:

> 4. Retorynyng in hire soule ay up and down
> The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede,
> His grete estat, and perel of the town,
> And that she was allone and hadde nede
> Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede
> The cause whi, the sothe forto telle,
> That she took fully purpos forto dwelle. (TC V.1023-29)

5. The morwen come and, gostly forto speke,
This Diomede is come unto Criseyde;
And shortly lest that ye my tale breke,
So wel he for hym selven spak and seyde,
That alle hire sikes soore adown he leyde;
And finaly, the sothe forto seyne,
He refte hire of the grete of alle hire peyne.
(TC V. 1030-36)

The repetition of this phrase of admission, so many times in such a short space, is an indication of the narrator's involvement, and his attempts to slow down the inevitable process. Also, this first pair of stanzas is an attempt at exculpation by reason. We have just been reminded of Criseyde's unhappy circumstances--that is, "hire fadres faire bright tente," and we are reminded once again of her loneliness and the absence of female friends. She has been betrayed by her father and her uncle, and in a sense by Troilus, who has made no heroic attempt to save her. This "sodeyn Diomede" must surely be better to have as a friend than an enemy. It is also a possibility to consider that Chaucer, with his vast knowledge of human nature, as well as his experience in politics, knew in 1386 what has only recently in the twentieth century been learned about hostage-related phenomena: hostages do become attached to their captors, female hostages often forming sexual bonds with male captors. (The psycho-social jargon-makers have called it the Stockholm Syndrome.)

"To tell the truth" is a way of indicating a confession of something the narrator does not relish telling. We have seen the cumulative effect of all these "sothes for to seyn": they slow the pace of the narrative. In case we have missed this, the narrator points it out to us: "And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke." The initial reaction to such a clause might well be an indulgent smile and a sub-vocal "what mean you 'ye', Geoffrey?" Surely he wants to emphasize the

dragging of his own heels as he approaches Criseyde's worst, inexcusable deeds. He is not much less uncomfortable after the fact of her betrayal of Troilus:

6. And after this the storie telleth us
That she hym yaf the faire baye stede,
The which he ones wan of Troilus;
And ek a broche--and that was litel nede--
That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomede;
And ek the bet from sorwe hym to releve,
She made hym were a pencel of hire sleve. (TC V.1037-43)

I fynde ek in the stories elles-where,
Whan thorugh the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho wep she many a teere,
Whan that she saugh hise wyde wowndes blede,
And that she took to kepen hym good hede,
And forto hele hym of his sorwes smerte,
Men seyn--I not--that she yaf hym hire herte.
(TC V.1044-50)

The narrator is giving us his interpretation of the various sources he has read. He is not sure about the horse. The only source which contains a reference to it is Benoit; Boccaccio does not mention it. Boccaccio does, however, mention the brooch. Chaucer has used both horse and brooch, perhaps as a token gesture of misogyny, or in an attempt to be comprehensive in his evidence-gathering. The horse and the brooch, however, are not quite of the same magnitude. The horse, even though it had belonged to Troilus, has been a gift from Diomede. Returning it to him could be taken in more than one way. But try as he might, not even the narrator can excuse her giving it to Diomede. His comment, "and that was litel nede," is an extremely mild rebuke, considering the fact that the giving of the brooch was unequivocally an act of will on Criseyde's part; there is no hint of coercion here. The mild criticism of her has been tucked into the middle of a stanza which ends with an excuse for her making Diomede wear a part of her sleeve as a token. Her pity for

Diomede in his sorrow is stressed, not her infidelity to Troilus.

The narrator's second stanza of this pair begins and ends with his comments. The first sounds a note of scholarly disinterest: "I fynde ek in the stories elles-where." The second is an open admission of uncertainty about the received text, opinion, or interpretation of the story. I include "interpretation" because Criseyde's heart is ultimately unknowable. She is like the reed which Pandarus has earlier described to Troilus (II.1380 ff.): she bends with each passing wind. Men, because they interpret from a position of power in Criseyde's world, can force her behavior to conform to their preconceived ideas of her. The narrator presents an argument against Criseyde's giving her heart to Diomede. Throughout the poem, he has really been closer to her than even Troilus. The narrator's affection, truly avuncular, as opposed to her real uncle's, cannot be as blind as Troilus's lust; we are, therefore, more inclined to trust the narrator's interpretations. He, after all, has little or nothing to gain from a sympathetic treatment of Criseyde, nor anything to lose by damning her.

> 8. But trewely the storie telleth us
> Ther made nevere woman moore wo
> Than whan that she falsed Troilus:
> She seyde, "allas, for now is clene ago
> My name of trouthe in love for evere mo,
> ffor I have falsed oon the gentileste
> That evere was and oon the worthieste. (TC V.1051-57)

This may seem harsh, coming from the narrator we know, but it must be viewed in perspective. Benoit's story (see Chapter I, pp. 7-9) contains a soliloquy of great length, during which Briseida laments the loss of her reputation and worries about what will be said and written about her. And she has been proven prophetic, as we have just been

reading. The difference between Benoit and Chaucer is that Benoit has created a much simpler, black-and-white (mostly black) character who functions as a mouthpiece for his own misogyny. Chaucer has created a timeless woman of great complexity, about whom critical discussion will never end. He has borrowed some of the more objectionable things from Benoit too, however, such as the fatuous bromides that argue a tendency to triviality in Criseyde. Lines such as "And that to late is now for me to rewe,/ To Diomede algate I wol be trewe" (V.1070-71), and her parting words to Troilus (ll. 1079-85) do little to redeem her in this treatment. Criseyde's lament is brief by comparison to Briseida's, and it is followed immediately by another narratorial comment:

> 9. But trewely, how longe it was bytwene
> That she forsok hym for this Diomede,
> There is non auctour telleth it, I wene.
> Take every man now to his bokes heede;
> He shal no terme fynden, out of drede.
> ffor though that he bigan to wowe hire soone,
> Er hire wan, yet was ther more to doone. (TC V.1086-92)

Criseyde's guilt is mitigated by the doubt that she yielded to Diomede prematurely. But the narrator's challenge to every man to consult the sources is a bluff; Benoit, according to Root's calculation, allows two years to have elapsed before she yields.[16] Boccaccio hints that her change of heart was much more sudden. But in the second book, even Pandarus, who is a very fast worker, is prepared to allow two years for the crumbling of Criseyde's defenses against Troilus:

> But Pandarus thought, "it shal nought be so,
> Yif that I may, this nyce opinyoun
> Shal nought be holden fully yeres two." (TC II.1296-98)

The next passage is

10. Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
fforther than the storye wol devyse:
Hire name, allas, is punysshed so wide,
That for hire gilt it ought ynough suffise;
And if I myght excuse hire any wise,
ffor she so sory was for hire untrouthe,
I-wis, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe. (TC V.1093-99)

The narrator has left himself open to the charge that he too has continued the propagation of Criseyde's bad name. But he is not saying that she did not do what "history" claims she has done. He has offered, throughout the text of his poem, reasons, excuses and mitigating circumstances which are quite believable. He is telling us that she has been punished enough; it is time to forgive her. (He is, after all, addressing a supposedly Christian audience.) But he saves his best shot for the last line: "I-wis, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe." At last, that ambiguous word routhe is to be turned to Criseyde's advantage instead of her betrayal. It is a reminder that routhe is owed to her, as she has given her love, in keeping with the courtly code, and in compliance with the males who dominate her, out of what has been convincingly argued as routhe. "As love for love is skylful guerdonynge" (II.392), then routhe for routhe is only fair.

After the intrusion above, the narrator gradually recedes from the foreground of the text. In keeping with the pattern set early in the poem, the narrator's absence is directly proportional to Pandarus's presence. Criseyde's weaknesses, as a character who is "slydynge of corage," are sometimes more apparent by the presence of a very protective narrator. Conversely, Pandarus's illusory power is fostered by the nearly total dissociation of the narrator from the character. That "moot hennes-forth ben matere of my [next] book" (IV.17).

NOTES

[1]Judith Ferster, Chaucer on Interpretation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3-4. I have adopted the term "hermeneutical circle" from Ferster, as it describes my own perception of what goes on in a reading of the Troilus.

[2]Nicholas R. Havely, Chaucer's Boccaccio (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980), pp. 20-21.

[3]Havely, p. 101.

[4]Havely, p. 102.

[5]See the first chapter of this thesis. See also Havely, p. 20.

[6]Barry A. Windeatt, ed., Troilus and Criseyde by Geoffrey Chaucer (London: Longman, 1984), pp. 560, 562. All subsequent Troilus references have been quoted from this edition, and will be identified in the text by book and line numbers only.

[7]Aeschylus, The Agamemnon, ll. 833-35 (my paraphrasing).

[8]Barry A. Windeatt, "Chaucer and the Filostrato," in Chaucer and the Italian Trecento, ed. Piero Boitani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 164.

[9]John H. Fisher, ed., The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), p. 569.

[10]Fisher, pp. 621-22, ll. 1-105.

[11]Wendy Childs, "Anglo-Italian Contacts in the Fourteenth Century," in Boitani, p. 67.

[12]Gerry Brenner, "Narrative Structure in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," Chaucer's Troilus: Essays in Criticism, ed. Stephen A. Barney (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1980), p. 132.

[13]David Aers, Chaucer, Langland and the Creative Imagination (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1980), p. 120.

[14]Aers, p. 122.

[15]Evan Carton, "Complicity and Responsibility in Pandarus' Bed and Chaucer's Art," PMLA 94:1 (1979): 57.

[16]Windeatt, p. 505.

CHAPTER III

PANDARUS

The previous chapter has dealt with the narrator of the Troilus as a manipulator of reader-response and as an extension of the poet within the poem. Now I would like to consider Pandarus, another of the poet's representatives within the poem, as a manipulator of the other characters in the poem, and as the poet's co-architect who works from within the poem itself.

As an approach to the analysis of what Pandarus actually accomplishes for Chaucer, it is important to review the changes Chaucer has made in his adoption of Pandaro from Boccaccio. The changes are profound; they affect and are affected by nearly all of Chaucer's other changes and additions to the Filostrato.

The first obvious change is that Pandarus is Criseyde's uncle, not her cousin. More will be said about the implications of that change later. It is a change compatible with the single most important basic change, the aging of Pandarus. In Il Filostrato, Pandaro is a contemporary of Troiolo and has much in common with him. T. G. Bergin has written that "it is probably not his [Pandaro's] role as a go-between that Boccaccio would stress; he seems rather to be set before us as the image of the perfect friend."[1] G. L. Kittredge takes a somewhat dimmer view: "Troiolo is hardly distinguishable from Pandaro, except in his misfortunes. Both are simply young men about town, with the easy principles of their class. If they changed places, we should not know

the difference."[2]

Perhaps Chaucer had made similar observations of Boccaccio's young men. On the positive side, he has explored fully, in the Troilus, various concepts of friendship.[3] He has also--and it may have been this very difference to which Kittredge was responding when he made his comment--aged Pandaro, thereby creating a great difference between Troilus and Pandarus and allowing for all the consequences of this initial major difference. With Pandarus's maturity comes a self-assuredness and immense confidence in his own powers, and the subtlety that Pandaro so clearly lacks. Chaucer has added to Pandarus's character a great deal of complexity and creativity.

I have stressed the importance of Pandarus's maturity because I think it is a feature which initially suggests to the reader the other resemblances between Pandarus and his creator. Chaucer was about forty-six when he wrote the Troilus, and Pandarus seems to be about that age too.

In several of his works, Chaucer's narrators consistently adopt the personae of unsuccessful lovers. Pandarus, it seems, is similarly afflicted with failure (I.621-23; II.97-98, 1105-07). This problem, as will be shown later, leads to certain ambiguities in Pandarus's manipulations of the lovers and consequent problems of interpretation.

Chaucer, the narrator and Pandarus may all be unsuccessful as lovers, but they are keenly interested in love, even though Pandarus is the only participant in that game. Love is one of Chaucer's favourite subjects for poetry, and we can scarcely imagine Pandarus more gleefully animated than when he has finally succeeded in getting Troilus to confess the name of his lady. He cries out, just when he knows Troilus is going

to tell him, "A ha!" [quod Pandare,] "here bygynneth game" (I.868).

Both creator and created here are remarkably energetic, humorous, observant, and interested in the psychology of their fellow beings, although not knowledgeable to the same degree. Both are also deceptively simple in manner, outlook, and speech. Both are very concerned with literary precedent and authority, and very respectful of the tradition (although their interpretations will be seen to vary somewhat).

The most important similarity between the poet and Pandarus is that both are creators. Chaucer is creating the whole poem, of which Pandarus is a part. And Pandarus in turn is creating the love story, according to his preconceived ideas about love and romance. The important difference between the two is that Chaucer, as he keeps reminding us, is constructing a literary structure from the foundation of old poems or stories; Pandarus is also constructing a romance, but in his sphere, the building materials are real people. This construction is best understood by following Pandarus through the poem.

Pandarus enters the poem as suddenly as his Italian progenitor does in Boccaccio's poem, but Chaucer has re-structured the poem in such a way as to make Pandarus's appearance more dramatic. Boccaccio ends the first part of the Filostrato with Troiolo's torments increasing "a hundredfold each day" (Il Fil I.456). Chaucer has piled woe upon woe for Troilus, even describing a particular scene into which Pandarus enters, before any obvious break in the flow of the poem or of Troilus's grief. Troiolo is merely alone in his room with his thoughts; Troilus is in extreme agony.

> By-wayling in his chambre thus allone,
> A frend of his that called was Pandare
> Com oones in unwar and herd hym groone,
> And say his frend in swich destresse and care:
> "Allas," quod he, "who causeth al this fare?
> O mercy, god, what unhap may this meene?
> Han now thus soone Grekes maad yow leene?" (TC I.548-53)

Pandarus's manner of entry is sudden and "unwar," his action--coming into Troilus's chamber unbidden and unannounced--is questionable: we are not sure how to interpret it. We must see him as a friend of Troilus's, but at the same time we must question his motivation as one of the characters in the poem.

Pandarus sets about his several tasks with prodigious energy. Superficially, he uses elementary psychological manipulation on Troilus, attempting to drive out Troilus's grief with anger; at the same time, he is attempting to discover the real reason for his friend's malaise. Pandarus tries to put Troilus in the position of having to deny the suggested reasons for his sorrow and to strengthen his denial by offering the real reason for his sadness. Chaucer lets us know that this manipulation has been deliberate and planned, and is explicit about the reason:

> Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
> That with swich thing he myght hym angry maken,
> And with an angre don his wo to falle,
> As for the tyme, and his corage awaken. (TC I.561-64)

There are no lines comparable to these in Boccaccio, although most of the scene is a fairly close translation. At a slightly deeper level, Chaucer is doing several things; of interest to us is his implicit practical demonstration of a problem he will explore later, elsewhere. As J. Ferster says:

> . . . each person is fundamentally alone and yet intricately linked to others. The links come about through interpretation, of which there are two kinds. . . . In the first kind, one person attempts in good faith to understand the view of another. In the second, one person projects his own intentions and desires onto the other, perhaps out of ignorance, perhaps in order to control him.[4]

In the present relationship between Pandarus and Troilus, Pandarus is definitely an interpreter of the second kind, and his motive is unmistakably the desire for control. He has deliberately projected a wrong meaning onto Troilus's weeping, in hopes of getting at the right one. This initial scene is a pattern for many of the scenes which follow, and for much of Pandarus's subsequent behavior.

Pandarus, like Chaucer, displays an astonishing versatility. Chaucer is able to create from his own inner resources a multitude of characters. Pandarus in turn seems able to adopt a surprising number of roles for himself, and to do so very quickly. This scene shows his talents well: when Troilus dismisses him, Pandarus realizes that the matter is serious and gets really interested. He outdoes Troilus at weeping, "this Pandarus that neigh malt for wo and routhe" (I.582). He then manipulates Troilus by making him feel cruel for withholding information from such a dear friend as himself. Pandarus has turned the situation around, reversing the emotional positions. He arouses pity in Troilus, along with a hinted-at sense of indebtedness. He subtly suggests complicity in past guilt, and while he does not suggest psychological blackmail, he comes close:

> As it is frendes right, soth forto seyne,
> To entreparten wo as glad desport.
> I have and shal, for trewe or fals report,
> In wronge and right i-loved the al my lyve:
> Hid nat thi wo fro me but telle it blyve. (TC I.591-95)

Chaucer is introducing here, through Pandarus, the audience of which the characters are conscious, the townspeople of Troy, their public. Pandarus counts on Troilus's concern for his public image; when he brings up "trewe and fals report," he is expressing to Troilus a shared consciousness of being interpreted and judged by a large, anonymous group whose interpretive acts he cannot control or even influence, for good or ill. The audience of Troy thus becomes another segment in the hermeneutical circle, forms a silent but powerful external force controlling the characters' actions. Not even Pandarus can control the beast that is the public. His manipulations work only on individuals, and only when they are alone or in very small groups.

Troilus does yield, but he yields in stages. There are about 270 lines between his initial confession that he is in love and the confession of Criseyde's name. In this scene, Chaucer has changed both Pandarus and Troilus a great deal from the Italian. Troiolo also yields in stages, but the two stages are very close to each other compared to the English version. The dual-staged confession is also a type of the doubling that Chaucer and Pandarus will practise throughout the poem as they construct the affair and the poem. The second stage of Troilus's confession is wrung out of him after a much longer harangue by Pandarus than was suggested by Boccaccio. Other doublings in the poem that will be considered later will include the two visits Pandarus makes to Criseyde's house, the two rides past Criseyde's house by Troilus, the pre-consummation visit of Criseyde to Troilus at Deiphebus's house, and the second visitor--himself--that he presents to Criseyde the morning after the first night she spends with Troilus. These incidents all form part of Pandarus's apparent creativity, all ironically undercut by the

obvious fact that they are but repetitions of what his author has already done.

Before leaving the scene of Pandarus's preliminary manipulations, it is important to look closely at Pandarus's long speeches. The first of these begins after--or is perhaps triggered by--Troilus's rather sharp come-back, "Thow koudest nevere in love thi selven wisse;/ How devel maistow brynge me to blisse?" (I.622-23). Pandarus has been put in his place, "told off," as we say. He cannot top Troilus's insult, so he changes his approach to what might be called filibustering. The first two stanzas are a string of proverbs; they present no real argument. A proverb is usually a conclusion, based on observation of a great many cases. Being conclusive but unproven, they are of dubious use in argument-building; but this is the use to which Pandarus puts them. Piled on on another, they are fools' wisdom, subject to manifold interpretations and therefore incapable of rendering any specific meaning; but they are Pandarus's authorities. The second pair of stanzas of this speech (I.638-51) shows Pandarus using the Boethian argument on knowledge, and he does get it right in essence. But he is almost carried away by his own rhetoric; he cannot refrain from continuing the list of antonyms once he has begun it. Along with the philosophy, he cites his own personal experience as a base from which he can offer good advice to Troilus. This passage is Chaucer's subtle articulation of the adage that those who can, do; those who cannot, counsel. After a two-stanza digression (I.652-65) on the story of Paris and Oenone, Pandarus reiterates his claim to competency by reason of incompetency (this time Chaucer is almost translating from Boccaccio (Il Fil II.11); but he omits the significant detail of Pandaro's confession of indiscretion).

"Right so fare I, unhappyly for me;
I love one best, and that me smerteth sore;
And yet, peraunter, kan I reden the,
And nat my self--repreve me na more.
I have no cause, I woot wel, forto sore
As doth an hauk that listeth forto pleye;
But to thin help yet somwhat kan I seye." (TC I.666-72)

Within this stanza there is a double statement of Pandarus's position. The repetitions of his unhappiness and the possibility of Troilus achieving happiness in love are a small example of Pandarus's ability to plan his construction with care. Troilus has earlier (ll. 622-23) chided Pandarus for presumption as an adviser in love affairs. Pandarus has no real argument against Troilus's insult; he simply waits until he thinks Troilus may have forgotten it and then denies it--twice in one stanza. There immediately follows a significant change in Chaucer's treatment of the story. Boccaccio has Troiolo listing all the incestuous possibilities to Pandaro before confessing that he loves Criseida. In the Troilus, it is Pandarus who first suggests the possibility of incest, "theigh that it were Eleyne/ That is thi brother wif," with the added difference that the idea does not bother him at all (I.677-78). He says to Troilus, "Be what she be, and love hire as the liste" (I.679). This small change in the characters has the effect of raising Troilus and lowering Pandarus in moral terms. But beyond that, it shows the length to which Pandarus will go to construct a romance. Clearly, the interdicts of his society--and incest is one of the strongest--have little suasion over Pandarus.

The speech flows on, uninterrupted by Troilus, not because he is paying rapt attention to Pandarus, but because he is completely self-absorbed. Pandarus, requiring immediate reactions, cries out loudly, "Awake," and tries to rouse Troilus from his melancholy reverie with another volley of proverbs. Troilus answers, with more than a hint of

irritation reminiscent of his earlier (I.622-23) speech to Pandarus, as follows:

> But natheles whan he hadde herd hym crye
> "Awake," he gan to syken wonder soore,
> And seyde, "frende, though that I stylle lye,
> I am nat deef; now pees, and crye namore,
> ffor I have herd thi wordes and thi lore;
> But suffre me my meschief to bywaille,
> ffor thy proverbes may me naught availle.
>
> Nor other cure kanstow non for me;
> Ek I nyl nat ben cured, I wol deye.
> What knowe I of the queene Nyobe?
> Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I the preye."
> "No," quod tho Pandarus, "therfore I seye,
> Swych is delit of foles to by-wepe
> Hire wo, but seken bote they ne kepe." (TC I.750-63)

There is some irony in Troilus's speech; the whole poem is about "olde ensaumples." Troilus's learning evidently has been, and will continue to be from experience, not from authority. However, it is Pandarus's more reasoned argument that induces Troilus to consider taking Pandarus's advice (I.820-28). Troilus is accepting an authority here, namely Pandarus, whose sources of knowledge are very obscure. When Pandarus does refer to an authority, it is usually in some phrase such as "the wise seith," "men seyn," or "this have I herd seyd of wyse lered." His authority is common knowledge, or commonly held opinion. Pandarus is clever, observant, and has listened much, but he is not educated as Chaucer and the narrator both appear to be. The narrator, Chaucer's other agent in the poem, alludes to "olde bokes" or his "auctour" as his authorities. The narrator also shows the mark of an educated person; he questions his authorities. Pandarus, conversely, never questions his, but acts on the strength of his knowledge, interpreting freely whatever kind of knowledge he feels is most useful in any given situation.

Pandarus resembles his creator in his ability to use whatever materials come to hand for his constructive purposes. Both also show a talent for building upon their own creations. Pandarus does this in the passage following Troilus's confession of Criseyde's name. There are three stanzas (I.876-896) immediately following this confession which are very close to the Italian. The last, according to Windeatt, "is only present in the Huntington Library manuscript, Phillips 8252. Its argument is something of an interpolation, and Chaucer may have intended to cancel it."[5] Chaucer's reason for cancelling it, if he wished to do so, might have been its dangerous closeness to blasphemy in the last line, "the oughte not to clepe it hap but grace" (I.896). But it should be noted that Chaucer frequently, and one supposes, deliberately uses religious language apropos of love, knowing it may trouble a reader by forcing an uneasy juxtaposition of the two value systems: "It sit hire naughte to ben celestial/ as yet" (I.983-84); "Love of his goodnesse/ Hath the converted out of wikkednesse" (I.998-99); "Immortal God . . ./ Cupid I mene" (III.185-86). The language of religion seems to suggest to Pandarus the next scene that he devises. Having heard Troilus's confession, he adopts more fully the role of a priest, giving penance and absolution:

> "Now bet thi brest and sey to god of love
> 'Thy grace, lord, for now I me repente
> If I mysspak, for now my self I love'--
> Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente." (TC I.932-34)

This is Pandarus at his irreverent, playful best. It is also Chaucer at his most probing questioning of the courtly code; the idea of placing the god of love in such a preeminent position is being held up for serious examination. The foolishness of it will be demonstrated by the events of

the poem. Troilus, in his greatly altered state, responds to Pandarus with total obedience to love's priest:

> Quod Troilus, "a, lord, I me consente,
> And preye to the my japes thow forgive,
> And I shal nevere more whyle I live." (TC I.936-38)

Pandarus has been jesting, but Troilus shows no sign of replying in the same spirit. Troilus, in no condition to be playful, yields a little more of himself to Pandarus in this scene, by acknowledging Pandarus as love's priest.

The first book ends on a rising note. Pandarus goes away to plan, and Troilus shows a remarkable ennoblement of character. In the following narrative passage, Chaucer explains what Pandarus is about to do.

> This Pandarus, tho desirous to serve
> His fulle frende, than seyde in this manere:
> "ffarwell, and thenk I wol thi thank deserve,
> Have here my trowthe, and that thow shalt wel here,"
> And went his wey thenkyng on this matere,
> And how he best myghte hire biseche of grace,
> And fynde a tyme therto and a place.
>
> ffor everi wight that hath an hous to founde
> Ne renneth naught the werk for to bygynne
> With rakel hond, but he wol bide a stounde,
> And sende his hertes line out fro with-inne
> Aldirfirst his purpos forto wynne.
> Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
> And caste his werk ful wisely or he wroughte. (TC I.1058-71)

Chaucer has here made Pandarus his own. Pandarus is doing what Geoffrey of Vinsauf has advised writers to do in his Poetria Nova, a treatise with which Chaucer was evidently very familiar. The writing of a poem is given the apt metaphor of building a house. Pandarus, thinking these thoughts, is not only doubling within the poem what Chaucer is doing writing the poem, he is also demonstrating, on Chaucer's behalf, what is

involved in the creative process. The narrator has invoked a muse at the beginning of the book, and will do so in later books as well. But here, Chaucer is reminding his readers that writing poetry is not dependent upon inspiration; it requires careful planning. Chaucer, by quoting Geoffrey of Vinsauf, is demonstrating his knowledge of literary theory and rhetorical practice; Pandarus, by thinking those same thoughts, demonstrates his knowledge of the need to plan.

In this passage, Pandarus is translating or applying literary theory to life. He has proven his knowledge of the forms of courtly love (I.792-819), and in the same conversation with Troilus has proven that if the courtly code of love is strictly adhered to (with regard to secrecy of love), nothing can come of Troilus's passion. Troilus can see that much, even through the erotic haze which surrounds him. C. Muscatine has pointed out that "even in [Chaucer's] most elevated and courtly works the bourgeois tradition has a place and a function."[6] Pandarus is the bourgeois element injected into the courtly romance, the practical, animal force which Chaucer has introduced to get love's commerce started. If I may extend Geoffrey of Vinsauf's metaphor, one cannot build a house using only the services of an architect; a competent on-site superintendent and some good labourers are equally indispensable. Pandarus fills all these jobs, with great confidence and inexhaustible energy. Pandarus has evidently played his role as planning architect very efficiently in the hiatus between his exit in Book I and his re-appearance in Book II (II.64).

Chaucer has expanded this section of the poem to almost double the length of the similar part in Il Filostrato, where Pandaro's negotiations with his cousin are conducted with cold-blooded brevity.

Pandarus, whose niece is a more difficult conquest than Criseida, must take much more time and many more pains. Before he begins his manipulations of Criseyde directly, there is a brief narrative passage preceding his first visit to Criseyde's house (II.50-77) which establishes certain things about Pandarus. Pandarus, unlike the narrator in the first proem, has not given up on love, nor has it given up on him:

> That Pandarus, for al his wise speche,
> ffelt ek his parte of loves shotes keene,
> That koude he nevere so wel of lovyng preche,
> It made his hewe a-day ful ofte greene;
> So shop it that hym fil that day a teene
> In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
> And made er it was day ful many a wente. (TC II.57-63)

Even Pandarus is subject to the "lawe of kynde" (I.238). For all his control over Troilus, and "for al his wise speche," he is not in control of himself. The following stanza turns from the playful to the foreboding. The mention of Procne always suggests betrayal of an innocent woman entrusted to a man, incest, and rape. Chaucer has made sure we are getting the allusion by devoting the whole stanza to its story; he has also embedded Pandarus's name squarely in the middle, creating on the page a visual metaphor of Pandarus's involvement in a betrayal:

> The swalowe Proigne with a sorowful lay
> Whan morwen com gan make hire waymentiyng
> Whi she forshapen was, and evere lay
> Pandare a-bedde half in a slomberyng,
> Til she so neigh hym made hire cheteryng,
> How Tereus gan forth hire suster take,
> That with the noyse of hire he gan awake. (TC II.64-70)

We are also given some idea of just how carefully Pandarus has planned his manipulations: he has worked out the optimal astrological outlook for his enterprise. Of greatest significance is the plea to Janus to

guide Pandarus. It is a singularly fitting god to address on Pandarus's behalf. Not only is Janus the god of doors, gates, entrances and exits (and all that these suggest), he is the god of all means of communication.

> Janus was also the god of 'beginnings.' As a solar god he presided over daybreak. He was soon considered as the promoter of all initiative and, in a general way, he was placed at the head of all human enterprises. For this reason the Romans ascribed to him an essential role in the creation of the world. He was the god of gods, Janus Pater.[7]

Chaucer has made the narrator's voice almost imperceptible in these stanzas (II.50-77), but has not placed the prayer to Janus in Pandarus's mouth, possibly because it is unseemly to have such a powerful persona humble himself in prayer to any deity. Nor has the narrator mentioned the quality which is most associated with Janus--two faces. Truly, Janus is a god seemingly designed for Pandarus.

Pandarus's first big speech is worth examining closely as a masterpiece of manipulation. Like his creator, Pandarus knows the value of weaving a many-stranded story, and the value of a leisurely pace of revelation; the Troilus itself is an example. It may be of some importance to the plot that the first thing Criseyde says to her uncle is that she has dreamed of him three times the previous night. Her later dreams are prophetic, but she is never quite sure how to interpret them. She does not say what she dreamed; the significance is ambiguous. Pandarus tells her that she "shal faren wel the bet,/ If god wol, al this yeere," an equally ambiguous interpretation of her dreams, if it is intended as such. Presumably she would fare well all year if God willed it, dreams or no dreams. The initial conversation between Pandarus and Criseyde establishes the closeness between them; they are clearly on friendly, familiar terms. They laugh together, and Criseyde teases her

uncle for his interest in love, which suggests that his love life must be a longstanding joke between them.

When Criseyde answers Pandarus's question about what they are reading, she seems genuinely interested in the book. He asks if it is about love, a profitable study (II.97). When she replies soberly about Amphioraus and hell, he dismisses the book, and begins to talk of cheerful dress and dancing, rather shocking Criseyde in her mourning dress. When she protests against levity (II.113-19), he changes the subject again and arouses her curiosity by saying he knows something that would make her gay. Gossip is infinitely more interesting to him than literary conversation; the personal is of much more importance to Pandarus than the political. He tells Criseyde, when she expresses fear of the Greeks, that his news "is a thing wel bet than swyche fyve" (II.126). He manipulates Criseyde into a state of curious anticipation by telling her that he will never tell her what he could tell her because she is--and she knows it--the proudest woman in Troy. From the evidence we have so far about Criseyde, this is not true at all. By accusing her of pride, he puts her on the defensive.

> This lady which that alday herd at ere
> Hire fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
> Wel neigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
> In widewes habet large of samyt broun,
> On knees she fil biforn Ector adown
> With pitous vois, and tendrely wepynge,
> His mercy bad, hir selven excusynge. (TC I.106-12)

David Aers has noted Chaucer's positioning of this scene and its "interesting contrast to images of the male prostrate before the female."[8] Furthermore, she has just expressed her great fear of the Greeks (II.124). Other sins she may be guilty of, but pride does not seem part of her

makeup. The first small climax of this scene is brought down by line 148: "So after this, with many wordes glade," after which Pandarus takes advantage of Criseyde's question about Hector to lead her into a conversation praising both Hector and Troilus, repeating widely held public opinion about the two, but getting in Troilus's name six times in as many stanzas:

> "Of Ector nedeth it namore forto telle:
> In al this world ther nys a bettre knyght
> Than he that is of worthynesse welle,
> And he wel moore vertue hath than myght;
> This knoweth many a wise and worthi wight." (TC II.176-80)

Criseyde already has experienced Hector's virtue, and trusts that Troilus is similar. Pandarus now knows that Criseyde is in a position to be manipulated, so he makes his next move. He gets up and pretends to be leaving.

Criseyde's response to this is to detain him, trying to do her own manipulating by saying that she must speak with him before he goes. But she is not really successful because in her dealings with Pandarus, she cannot manipulate from a position of power. She has to ask him for advice or at least keep him informed "of hire estat and of hire governaunce" (II.219). Pandarus, after hearing her out, again pretends to be about to leave. Again, he asks her to dance with him, but this time his reason is that she has good fortune. The first time it was to "don to May som observaunce" (I.112). Pandarus is doubling actions again here, in close sequence, but with enough variation in the repetitions that, to Criseyde, they perhaps seem new. He rekindles her curiosity to the point where she again asks to be told the secret news, only to have him tell her, "No, this thing axeth leyser, . . . And eke me wolde muche

greve, i-wis,/ If I it tolde and ye it toke amys" (II.225-29). They have had "leyser"--over a hundred recorded lines and more--as the following stanza indicates:

> So after this, with many wordes glade,
> And frendly tales and with merie chiere,
> Of this and that they pleide and gonnen wade
> In many an unkouth, gladde, and depe matere,
> As frendes doon whan thei ben mette y-fare,
> Tyl she gan axen hym how Ector ferde,
> That was the townes wal and Grekes yerde. (TC II.148-54)

Pandarus has had plenty of time to bring up his subject but, as the last couplet above indicates, he has been waiting for a suitable opportunity to lead the conversation back to his original purpose. The second excuse he has offered (above) for not sharing his secret with Criseyde--"And eke . . . ye it toke amyss"--is placed immediately after his second invitation to Criseyde to dance. She has been offended the first time (II.113-19). By the time this second invitation comes, she has obviously been mollified by Pandarus's long, friendly conversation, to the point where she is merely curious. He swears that he loves her more than any other woman living, "with-outen paramours" (II.236), and that is the reason he has said, "Yet were it bet my tonge forto stille/ Than seye a soth that were ageyns youre wille" (II.230-31). His protestation will soon be proven false, but it gets the immediate response Pandarus wants: Criseyde repays the compliment:

> "I-wis, myn uncle," quod she, "grant mercy;
> Youre frendshipe have I founden evere yit;
> I am to no man holden, trewely,
> So muche as yow, and have so litel quyt;
> And with the grace of god, emforth my wit,
> As in my gylt I shall yow nevere offende,
> And if I have er this, I wol amende." (TC II.239-45)

The readers know that Criseyde's speech is no truer than Pandarus's; she

is beholden to Hector for her very life, and we have just been reminded of that by Criseyde herself, when she asks Pandarus how Hector is faring (ll. 153-54). Criseyde, then, must be either extremely forgetful, or she is lying deliberately, for some motive unknown to the reader, or she is saying what she knows Pandarus expects to hear. The last is the most likely possibility; she knows that in her position she must respond in any way that Pandarus might choose to expect. Their exchange parallels in one way the confession of Troilus and the assumption by Pandarus of the role of priest (I.910-38). Criseyde's speech comes close to an act of contrition; the irony of it is that up to this point, she does not appear to have done anything wrong. Her speech reassures Pandarus of her obedience, and he kisses her, saying "Tak it for good that I shal sey yow here" (II.252). The kiss seems to punctuate the first round of manipulation and signal the beginning of the next, which begins with the rather awkward body language which passes between them:

> With that she gan hire eighen down to caste,
> And Pandarus to coghe gan a'lite,
> And seyde, "Nece, alwey, lo, to the laste,
> How so it be that som men hem delite
> With subtyl art hire tales forto endite,
> Yet for al that, in hire entencioun,
> Hire tale is al for som conclusioun.
>
> And sithen thende is every tales strengthe,
> And this matere is so bihovely,
> What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
> To yow that ben my frend so feythfully?" (TC II.253-63)

The agreement they have just made, to abandon circumlocution and be open and honest with one another, has suddenly made them both uncomfortable: Criseyde looks down, and Pandarus coughs. It would seem from this that their relationship is deficient in some way, if they cannot discuss serious matters comfortably. Their discomfort also suggests a latent

knowledge of which they are vaguely aware but cannot yet admit in plain speech. Pandarus's speech following the cough is self-contradictory by virtue of its existence. The speech is itself a further delay, simply more of Pandarus's own "subtyl art." It is also occupatio compounded. Within the poem, Pandarus is telling Criseyde that he will not tell a long story artfully "for som conclusioun." But he does go on after this speech for at least seven more stanzas before Criseyde interrupts, begging him "for goddes love" to tell her "what it is" (II.309-10). He has also already done--for over a hundred and fifty lines--what he says he would not do. As Pandarus is practising his rhetorical art on Criseyde, we become aware, by his mention of the technique, of Chaucer practising his art on us, through Pandarus. This artistic self-consciousness of both Chaucer and Pandarus is reinforced by the contrast between what Pandarus tells Criseyde (II.255-67, 276-80) and what he thinks:

> Than thought he thus, "if I my tale endite
> Aught harde, or make a proces any whyle,
> She shal no savour have ther-in but lite,
> And trowe I wolde hire in my wil bigyle;
> ffor tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
> Ther as thei kan nought pleynly understonde;
> fforthi hire wit to serven wol I fonde." (TC II.267-73)

Pandarus is illustrating for Chaucer the precept of tailoring the speech to the audience. Sister Francis D. Covella has commented on this aspect of Chaucer with respect to the ending of the Troilus; I believe her observations are equally fitted to what Pandarus is doing: "In fact, audience is frequently an important determinant of what the speaker says and how he says it . . . the attitude of the speaker to what he is saying is also conditioned, at least partially, by anticipation of audience response."[9] The question remaining to the reader is this: why, if

Criseyde is of such "tendre wittes," does Pandarus require such delicacy in his manipulations of her to succeed? And why, if he thinks that if he makes too long a story "She shal no savour have ther-in but lite," has he already made too long a story? I would suggest that Chaucer does not want his readers to be in too easy an agreement with Pandarus about the mind of Criseyde. The whole scene just past has displayed not only the subtlety of Pandarus's manipulations, but the necessity for such subtlety. I think that Chaucer is also demonstrating, at this point in Pandarus's manipulations, the potential for excess which threatens any artistic or creative act. At the most obvious level, Chaucer is showing how important it is to plan, as his co-architect is planning.

When Pandarus does finally reveal his great secret, he presents it, after a small echo of his former occupatio ("And were it thyng that me thoughte unsittynge,/ To yow wolde I no swiche tales brynge" [II.307-08]), in very plain terms:

> "Now, Nece myn, the kynges deere sone,
> The good, wise, worthi, fresshe and free,
> Which alwey for to don wel is his wone,
> The noble Troilus, so loveth the,
> That, but ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
> Lo, here is al—what sholde I moore sey?
> Do what yow lest to make hym lyve or dey." (TC II.316-22)

Pandarus, who has planned this moment so subtly, is resorting to veiled threat. As Aers has pointed out, "he uses the first three lines as both bait and threat."[10] Again, after saying "What sholde I moore say?" he rushes into another sixty-three-line torrent of speech. Criseyde has no chance to react. His rhetoric is very much in the courtly tradition, but he exaggerates as we have come to expect him to do: he says that not only will Troilus die if Criseyde does not look favourably upon him, but

that he, Pandarus, will also die because Troilus is his best friend. He also continues to deny his acts of pandering even as he is committing them: he protests that he would rather they all three be hanged than he be Troilus's baude (II.351-54). His whole speech (ll. 323-85) is a series of simultaneous incrimination and self-exoneration. His speech is also just ambiguous enough to leave unanswered the question of just what it is he wants Criseyde to do. She too is in doubt:

> Criseyde, which that herde hym in this wise,
> Thought, "I shal felen what he meneth, y-wis."
> "Now, Em," quod she, "what wolde ye devise?
> What is youre rede I sholde don of this?"
> "That is wel seyd," quod he, "certeyn, best is
> That ye hym love ageyn for his lovynge,
> As love for love is skilful guerdonynge." (TC II.386-92)

This stanza is an example of the unreliability of language, and of the extreme changes which anything--love, language, fact--can undergo in translation or transportation. Pandarus has used "love" and "love" and separated them by only one small preposition. They are spelled the same, pronounced the same, and their meanings are utterly disparate. The love which Troilus has entrusted to Pandarus to communicate to Criseyde has been transformed and translated by Pandarus's interpretively active mind into something much more than what Troilus originally thought of. The love Troilus requires, Pandarus assures Criseyde, is nothing more than to "make hym bettre chiere" (II.360).

This scene presents the ambiguous association between courtly love and lust, as well as the argument between courtly love and the medieval Christian attitude to love. Troilus's feelings are in keeping with the courtly code as described by Andreas Capellanus.[11] Criseyde's feelings are, at this stage of the affair, nothing that would cause even

St. Paul himself to scowl.[12] There is a faint Pauline echo in Pandarus's own speech when he says to Criseyde, "What, who wol demen, though he se a man/ To temple to, that he thymages eteth?" (II.372-73).[13] Pandarus knows the form of the courtly code, but as usual, he goes too far in his efforts to fit people into the form. According to the code, the lady is in complete control. Pandarus has used tactics which border on the coercive. His success is not wholly due to his own efforts; Criseyde, we are told several times, is "the ferfulleste wight" (see also I.95, II.124, 302, 449, 603-09). We also see, later, when she is alone, a self-contradictory Criseyde. It is not surprising that Criseyde has been interpreted so many ways: she is a very puzzling characterization in Chaucer's version of the poem. Her changes of mind and heart do, however, reflect one fairly constant trait: her enormous susceptibility to art.

Pandarus has won the first round of negotiations with Criseyde, and responds to her inquiry of how he came to know of Troilus's love for her. His reply is a twelve-stanza creation which Pandarus appears to compose as he is telling. The story serves several purposes: it reinforces in Criseyde the idea that Troilus is suffering, it advertises Pandarus's cleverness at finding out Troilus's secret, it allows Pandarus to paint himself as a compassionate friend of Troilus, and it serves Chaucer's purpose of demonstrating the effect that a good story-teller can have on an audience. Pandarus, while he is telling the story, has Criseyde's rapt attention. It is that way with story-tellers. We listen as much to the teller as to the tale. For Pandarus, and for all story-tellers, there is a certain amount of gratification to be derived from commanding an audience; for Pandarus, even his niece will do for an audience. If he were benign, Pandarus might have been a harmless gossip,

content to claim the temporary attention of those to whom he retails neighborhood news. But Pandarus's motive is a need for control, not mere attention. In this interview with Criseyde, he gains a measure of control over her.

Pandarus's success as a creator is only partial. It may be that Chaucer is a jealous creator, or that he is determined to have his little joke on his creation as he had on Petrarch (see Chapter II, p. 40). No matter how hard he works, Pandarus's "bisynesse" is no match for the chance events which Chaucer has inherited from Boccaccio or created himself, the poetry of a song, the written word, or even the very energy of love itself. Chaucer is interested in those things which inspire people to love. We must always wonder if Criseyde would have found Troilus as attractive as she does if Pandarus had not first planted the idea in her mind. She is clearly susceptible to poetry and music, as her response to Antigone's song indicates. The song, more than Pandarus's threats and cajolery, "dide erst and synken in hire herte" (II.902). And it will be Troilus's letter, however artificially conceived, that will get her quiet approval.

Pandarus is given a final scene with Troilus, beginning at line 939ff. when "This Pandarus com lepyng in attones," obviously eager to convey his good news to Troilus, and to boast a bit; "ffor thus ferforth I have thi werk bigonne, . . . Hire love of frendshipe have I to the wonne" (II.960, 962). Troilus's response is one of extreme gratitude. His behavior is no longer in any accord with that one would expect of a son of Priam; he is completely in Pandarus's control. The evidence for this is in Pandarus's lines, "And for-thi, werk som-what as I shal seye,/ Or on som other wight this charge leye" (II.993-94). This is rather

un-servile talk from a servant of love's servants, and rather disrespectful to a prince, but Troilus accepts it. Troilus is now in the position of having to ask Pandarus what to do next. Pandarus, for all his bluster, retreats into the subjunctive when put in the position of having to take responsibility (II.1002-08).

The first thing Pandarus advises is the ride past Criseyde's house. This is another doubling or repetition of actions, in some way mirroring Chaucer's own repetition of the events which Boccaccio has provided. It may also be Chaucer's way of noting for his audience that a creative poet does not necessarily have to originate entirely new material in order to succeed. Within the poem, this doubling creates a pleasing balance, and allows for the suggestion of psychological progress. The subtler changes stand out against the similarities of events. The other significant doubling in the second book is the extra meeting that the lovers enjoy at Deiphebus's house. Pandarus appears to have had a very free hand in the orchestration of that meeting. In fact, it is the meeting at Deiphebus's house that is perhaps his greatest challenge, because it involves the manipulation of a number of other people: Deiphebus, Helen, and to a lesser degree, Antigone.

Prior to the lovers' meeting at Deiphebus's house, Pandarus has suggested to Troilus that the young man write a love letter. This is an opportunity for both the co-architects to discuss theory. Pandarus begins to give Troilus dictation on how to write the letter.

> "Towchyng thi lettre, thou art wys ynough;
> I woot thow nylt it dygneliche endite,
> As make it with thise argumentes tough,
> Ne scryvenyssh or craftily thow it write;
> Biblotte it with thi teris ek a lite,
> And if thow write a goodly word al softe,
> Though it be good, reherce it nought to ofte." (TC II.1023-29)

Pandarus goes on for two more stanzas, speaking more and more metaphorically, and undermining his own lesson. The stanza above advises tailoring the letter to the recipient. In other words, keep it simple; otherwise you will not be understood. Pandarus is counselling deceit of a sort, but his little lecture on ars dictaminis brings up the question of how much tailoring for the recipient constitutes deceit? It also raises the question of how much there is in or inseparable from love itself. Chaucer is having his own fun, juxtaposing the concerns of Pandarus and Troilus; the latter, for his part, is concerned for a reason different from Pandarus's:

> "Allas, my deere brother Pandarus,
> I am ashamed forto write, ywis,
> Lest of myn innocence I seyde amys,
> Or that she nolde it for despit receyve;
> Than were I ded, ther myght it nothyng weyve."
> (TC II.1046-50)

The juxtaposition is also of the problems of naivete and extreme sophistication in written communication, and the interpretive problems they are likely to create. It seems as if real, honest communication may not be possible via the written word. When the lovers do finally meet and talk at length in the third book, their communication is hindered only by the presence of Pandarus, who stays around attempting to direct his own play from centre stage, constantly interrupting with threats, poking at his niece, and just being a general nuisance. The third book sees Pandarus's labours come to fruition. Pandarus, realizing that he may not be indispensable to Troilus once Criseyde has been bedded, makes his bid for continued power over Troilus by insisting that Troilus share in the guilt over Criseyde's corruption:

"That is to seye, for the am I bicomen,
Betwixen game and ernest, swich a meene
As maken wommen un-to men to comen--
Al sey I nought, thow wost wel what I meene:
ffor the have I my Nece, of vices cleene,
So fully maad thi gentilesse triste,
That al shal ben right as thi selven liste.

But god, that al woot, take I to witnesse,
That nevere I this for covetise wroughte,
But oonly for tabregge that distresse,
ffor which wel neigh thow deidest, as me thoughte.
But goode brother, do now as the oughte,
ffor goddes love, and kepe hire out of blame,
Syn thow art wys, and save alwey hire name." (TC III.253-66)

By making Troilus, or his own love for Troilus, his reason for being a pimp, Pandarus implicates Troilus in his crime as its first cause. There is no mention in this passage of Pandarus's eagerness to help. Now he emphasizes Criseyde's innocence and the acuteness of Troilus's former distress. When he first offered his services, he had emphasized other traits of Criseyde's (I.897-903, 981-87), and minimized the seriousness of the enterprise. Pandarus's use of language in the passage above is to be noted for its potency by virtue of its understatement. His refusal to say outright what he is--"thow wost wel what I meene"--adds to the feigned repugnance of his crime. His repetition of the phrase "for the," and the natural emphasis placed on "the" in scansion, as well as the five second-person pronouns addressed to Troilus, add to the weight of the speech. Pandarus has assumed control of Troilus mainly by claiming to have Troilus's happiness uppermost in his mind; he is to some degree consistent in maintaining that control by the same claim, but now he has added the bond of shared guilt.

Pandarus as a co-architect within the poem is much more susceptible to intense involvement than the poet, who remains paradoxically visible but aloof, behind the narrator. Pandarus, whose ruling passion

is the desire for power, cannot maintain a consistent attitude toward the lovers throughout the poem. In the first book, he has indicated that he would be happy too if Troilus succeeded in winning the love of Criseyde: "And so we may be gladed alle thre" (I.994). But as the consummation approaches, there is a change in Pandarus's expressed emotions:

> And bid for me syn thow art now in blysse,
> That god me sende deth or soone lisse. (III.342-43)

With the love of Troilus and Criseyde so near consummation, Pandarus reflects how his own "blysse" is so far from even being possible.

As the consummation nears, Pandarus becomes even more hyperactive, both linguistically and physically, and more harshly domineering toward the lovers. Rather than long strings of proverbs, his speeches tend more to be short bursts of commands and insults. He says to Troilus, "Thow wrecched mouses herte,/ Artow agast so that she wol the byte?" (III.736-37). He lies to Criseyde about Troilus's jealousy, and his use of language to her becomes so perverted as to be almost inverted:

> "A ryng?" quod he, "ye, haselwodes shaken!
> Ye, Nece myn, that ryng moste han a stoon
> That myghte dede men alyve maken,
> And swich a ryng trowe I that ye have non:
> Discrecioun out of youre hed is gon,
> . . . . . .
> Woot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage
> Ne sorweth nought, ne stynteth ek, for lite?"
> (TC III.890-98)

Pandarus's eager interest in the consummation and his loss of urbanity may be related as cause and effect. Together, they bespeak more voyeurism than altruism in Pandarus the character as he is created by Chaucer. However, if we are looking at Pandarus as a creator, we perceive his interest less as prurience and his harsh diction more as a manifestation of anxiety attendant upon the completion of any major work.

Chaucer has managed to illustrate another problem common to all creative artists: How does the artist know when he is finished? It would seem that Pandarus has chosen a difficult field. In a more recent time, according to oral tradition, Renoir had no difficulty answering such a question: "When I want to pinch [the flesh I've painted]." Paul Valery, however, claimed that "A poem is never finished, only abandoned."[14] Pandarus's art is more like Valery's than Renoir's, and Pandarus is very loath to abandon his creation. In fact, as the consummation scene progresses, it becomes clear that Pandarus is reluctant to acknowledge that his work is done.

The great expansion of the consummation scene almost amounts to a doubling of it. The first act of introducing Troilus into Criseyde's bedchamber has as its focus the breaching of Criseyde's privacy and the breaking down of her last resistance. On first reading of the poem, the reader/listener expects the consummation immediately after the following stanza:

> Quod Pandarus, "now wol ye wel bigynne;
> Now doth hym sitte, goode Nece deere,
> Up-on youre beddes syde al ther with-inne,
> That eche of yow the bet may other heere."
> And with that word he drow hym to the feere,
> And took a light and fond his contenaunce,
> As forto looke upon an old romaunce. (TC III.974-80)

It is unclear how far away from the bed the fire is, but there is a sense of the lovers finally being left alone. Their conversation proceeds to the comic climax of Troilus falling "al sodeynly a-swowne" (III.1092), 112 lines after we think Pandarus has retired. Pandarus reappears and this time throws Troilus into bed with Criseyde, in a gross parody of his own function as go-between. His second withdrawal is similar to the first, but this time he acknowledges his uselessness to the lovers.

> Quod Pandarus, "for aught I kan aspien,
> This light nor I ne serven here of nought;
> Light is nought good for sike folkes yen;
> But for the love of god, syn ye ben brought
> In thus good plit, lat now no hevy thought
> Ben hangyng in the hertes of yow tweye"--
> And bar the candel to the chymeneye. (TC III.1135-41)

The whole long scene, from Pandarus's entrance into Criseyde's bedroom (I.750) to his second exit (l. 1141) can be divided into two parts, as I have shown. The first part, which ends with the first exit of Pandarus (l. 980), has no exact counterpart in the sources, and it is this first part which is wholly Pandarus's creation. It is all his careful planning and manipulating that have brought things along to this point. But in one sense, Pandarus is doomed to comic failure even when he plays at love on others' behalf: Troilus faints. Pandarus has failed to understand that the "lawe of kynde," while it cannot be disobeyed, can neither be hurried nor helped. It is only after Pandarus recognizes that neither he nor his feeble light are required in the room that Troilus and Criseyde can enjoy the normal delights of love. There is a fine distinction between creating and meddling; Chaucer demonstrates his understanding of the distinction by a demonstration of Pandarus's misunderstanding. The two parts of the scene form an instructive contrast in the investigation of creativity.

After Pandarus's second exit at line 1141, his work as a go-between and his consequent necessity to the lovers is lessened a great deal. But he remains in the poem and continues to manipulate the lovers long after he has any right or reason to. It is from his continued presence and his subsequent linguistic manipulations of Troilus and Criseyde that we come to see him most clearly as a character whose principal motivation is power, and as a co-architect who is very much a

darker, perverted representation of Chaucer. The darkness of Pandarus is best revealed in the morning light of Criseyde's sleeping quarters in Pandarus's house, immediately following the first night she spends with Troilus:

> Pandarus, o-morwe which that comen was
> Unto his Nece and gan hire faire grete,
> Seyde, "al this nyght so reyned it, allas,
> That al my drede is that ye, Nece swete,
> Han litel laiser had to slepe and mete;
> Al nyght," quod he, "hath reyn so do me wake,-
> That som of us, I trowe, hire hedes ake."
>
> And ner he com and seyde, "how stant it now
> This mury morwe, Nece, how kan ye fare?"
> Criseyde answerde, "nevere the bet for yow,
> ffox that ye ben, god yeve youre herte kare!
> God help me so, ye caused al this fare,
> Trowe I," quod she; "for al youre wordes white,
> O, who-so seeth yow, knoweth yow ful lite."
>
> With that she gan hire face forto wrye
> With the shete, and wax for shame al reede;
> And Pandarus gan under forto prie,
> And seyde, "Nece, if that I shal be dede,
> Have here a swerd and smyteth of myn hede."
> With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
> Under hire nekke and at the laste hire kyste.
>
> [I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye--
> What! god for-yaf his deth, and she al-so
> ffor-yaf, and with here uncle gan to pleye,
> ffor other cause was ther noon than so.
> But of this thing right to the effect to go,
> Whan tyme was, hom to here hous she wente,
> And Pandarus hath fully his entente.] (TC III.1555-82)

Without reading anything into the text of this passage, it is apparent that Pandarus has taken enormous interest in Troilus and Criseyde's lovemaking and has also derived intense vicarious pleasure from it as well. The pain of his "aking hede" does not excite our pity; it seems more a "joly wo, a lusty sorwe" (II.1099). We do not know whether it excites Criseyde's "routhe" or not when he presents it to her and invites

her to "smyteth of [his] hede." All we are told is that he suddenly puts one arm under her neck and kisses her. The narrator intrudes then, with a stanza so ambiguous that it invites speculation. It is Chaucer setting his hermeneutical trap.

There is no scene comparable to this in Boccaccio; it is completely Chaucer's own. It must have posed a problem for Chaucer's contemporaries as well as later editors, because it is not included in all the manuscripts (see Windeatt, p. 329). It is still a problem for critics, many of whom simply ignore it. The two extremes of opinion seem to be that an incestuous encounter takes place, and that such a possibility does not even exist.[15] My own hypothesis stands somewhere between the two extremes, and is predicated upon my reading of the whole poem. If we extract the passage from its context, and do a close but imaginative reading of it, then we must accept at least the strong probability that Pandarus goes to bed with Criseyde. The double meanings of the words "hede," "swerd," "dede," and, in the narrative stanza, "pleye," all increase the awareness of a potentially sexual situation. Also in the stanza of narrative comment is the proverbial expression of forgiveness to a ridiculous extreme. All these things suggest sex.

But we cannot extract the passage from its surrounding poem. It must be read in context, and no matter how much is suggested, the reader must come to the realization that the passage cannot be rationally interpreted as a veiled account of incest; it simply does not fit. Chaucer knows that very well, and has placed it where it is, immediately following the liebesnacht and preceding the companion scene between Pandarus and Troilus, to make his readers conscious of the context and its importance. Pandarus has articulated earlier in the poem the question

of interpretation from circumstance and cold logic as distinguished from interpretation from context: "What, who wol demen, though he se a man/ To temple go, that he thymages eteth?" We cannot but suspect that the narrator's intrusion here is deliberately ambiguous, and designed to force the reader to a careful consideration of the whole interpretive process.

The last line of the narrator's intrusive stanza is a summary of Pandarus's greatest moment, whether or not we believe him to have extracted his brokerage fees "in kynde." As the co-architect and engineer of the romance, he has achieved success. His work is done. From now on, the maintenance of the structure ought to be the responsibility of the lovers. But Pandarus is a little reluctant to relinquish the power he has enjoyed, as we see in the scene which follows, in Troilus's bedroom. This scene, in contrast to the previous one, is closely based on Boccaccio. Troilus falls on his knees and offers to sell his life in service to Pandarus. Pandarus, never able to pass up an opportunity, sagely warns Troilus that he may be happy now, but there are no guarantees of permanence (III.1618-24).

In the fourth book, Pandarus's importance and his energies both wane. There are structural parallels here with the visits he has made to Troilus and Criseyde in the first and second books, but his former powers are no longer in evidence. The romance he has constructed is being destroyed, and he is powerless against Fortune. He has been able to create a romance from a base of Troilus's attraction to Criseyde, and with some help from Criseyde, circumstances and fate. But he is unable to maintain or rebuild; his creativity, perhaps because it is falsely based, in the courtly tradition, and because it has promised a false

felicity, cannot be ultimately successful. His suggestion to Troilus that "this town is ful of ladyes al aboute" (IV.401) reveals the limits of his creative imagination and the limits of his understanding of love. It is true, and Pandarus has recognized as true, that the ultimate point of a romance, even according to the refinements of the courtly code, is making love. But Pandarus has been unaware, and will remain so, of all the other components of the love which Troilus and Criseyde have shared.

Chaucer's irony is turned on Pandarus, who has been given real people with whom to play and use as building blocks in his house--and who finds that the structure will not stand. Pandarus has tried to fit people to his conception of the form of a romance, and he has failed. Chaucer has proven the ineffectiveness of such a tradition if it is applied to real people. It must remain a quaint literary convention, and not a formula for real love.

For the last two books, we perceive Pandarus more as another character, than as Chaucer's co-architect within the poem. He is subject to as much bitterness as Troilus is to sorrow. His experiences have made him cynical:

> This Troylus in teris gan distille,
> As licour out of a lambyc ful faste;
> And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,
> And to the ground his eyen doun he caste;
> But natheles, thus thought he at the laste;
> "What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
> Yet shal I som-what more un-to hym seye." (TC IV.519-25)

Pandarus's mood here is one of despair. Gone is the resourceful fixer. He no longer comes "lepyng in attones," and the word "jape" has not appeared for a long time. In real sorrow, Pandarus can only follow Troilus's lead, like the proverbial chameleon on the plaid blanket. His

end is justly ignominious:

> But at the laste thus he spak and seyde:
> "My brother deer, I may do the namore.
> What sholde I seyn? I hate, ywys, Criseyde,
> And god woot, I wol hate hire evermore.
> And that thow me bisoughtest don of yoore,
> Havyng un-to myn honour ne my reste
> Right no reward, I dide al that the leste.
>
> "If I dide aught that myghte liken the,
> It is me lief, and of this tresoun now,
> God woot that it a sorwe is unto me;
> And dredeles, for hertes ese of yow,
> Right fayn I wolde amende it, wiste I how.
> And fro this world almyghty god I preye
> Delivere hire soon, I kan namore seye." (TC V.1730-43)

These are Pandarus's last words. Even the seemingly endless stream of proverbs has dried up. It is a fitting end for him, this admission that he can say no more. In terms of medieval tragic theory, Pandarus has been a tragic hero, his progress resembling the inverted "V." As a character, his development has been retrograde. As an architect, he has been a partial success, but a greater failure. As the dark side of Chaucer, he has been most effective and most useful to the processes and purposes of his creator.

As the narrator approaches the end of his structure, his rebellion against it increases in direct proportion to the unrelenting process of disillusionment. Pandarus, whose perceptions are in fact more limited than the narrator's, provides an even more sombre and disillusioned commentary on the inevitable course of events. Both the narrator, who longs for the ideals of romance, and Pandarus, who has enjoyed his vicarious sexual experiences, are brought up short against the intractable. The famous ending, which at last allows Troilus perspective on his own life, sets the temporal concerns of Pandarus and the narrator in perspective as well.

NOTES

[1]Thomas G. Bergin, Boccaccio (New York: Viking, 1981), p. 109.

[2]George Lyman Kittredge, "Troilus," in Chaucer's Troilus: Essays in Criticism (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1980), p. 9.

[3]Alan T. Gaylord, "Friendship in Chaucer's Troilus," Chaucer Review 3:4 (1969): 239-264.

[4]Judith Ferster, Chaucer on Interpretation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 24.

[5]Barry A. Windeatt, ed., Geoffrey Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde (Burnt Mill, Harlow, Sussex: Longman Group Ltd., 1984), p. 139.

[6]Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 59.

[7]"Roman Mythology," New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, 1974 ed., p. 200.

[8]David Aers, Chaucer, Langland and the Creative Imagination (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 120.

[9]Sister Francis Dolores Covella, "Audience as Determinant of Meaning in the Troilus," Chaucer Review 2 (4): 235.

[10]Aers, p. 122.

[11]P. G. Walsh, ed., Andreas Capellanus on Love (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1982), pp. 283-85.

[12]I. Corinthians 7:8.

[13]I. Corinthians 8:10.

[14]Paul Valéry, The Art of Poetry (New York: Pantheon, 1958), pp. 140-41.

[15]Evan Carton, "Complicity and Responsibility in Pandarus' Bed and Chaucer's Art," PMLA 94 (1979): 47-61.

[16]Winthrop Wetherbee, Chaucer and the Poets: An Essay on Troilus and Criseyde (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 45.

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